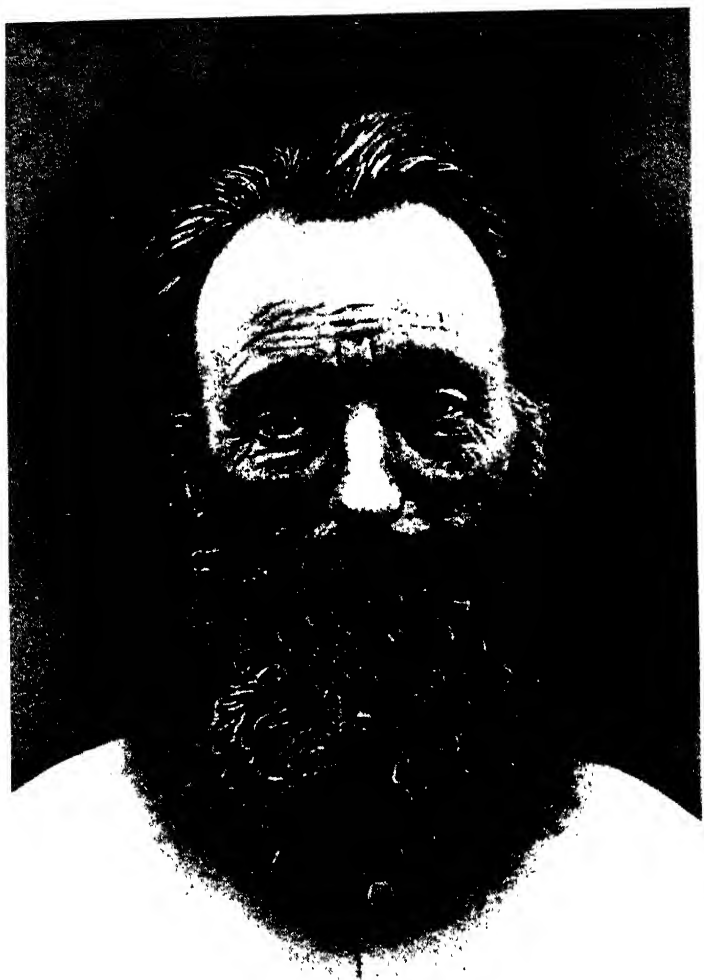


LETHABY OF MOAB

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WILLIAM LETHABY

LETHABY OF MOAB;

A Record of
Missionary Adventure, Peril, and Toil

BY
THOMAS DURLEY

Author of
"ALMONERS OF THE KING," etc.

WITH "RECOLLECTIONS" BY THE REV. I. E. PAGE



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PREFACE

THIS book aims at delineating the main features of a man's life singularly unlike most of his fellows—a life full of incident of an uncommon kind.

His paramount unselfishness carved out for him a rugged, picturesque course, some of the lines of which it would seem worth while to retrace.

Fortunately, material is at hand to aid. Two of his closest friends kept a large number of letters, most kindly made serviceable. Wherever possible, the actual words of the chief actors tell the story.

The correspondence consequent on the unwonted and unwelcome, but frequent, separation of husband and wife at the call of duty, has also been helpful in keeping a comparatively unbroken narrative; while a small outer circle, closely in touch, has rendered effective service to the grateful biographer.

To Sir John Gray-Hill, to Mr. John Murray, to the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, to the Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and to the Methodist Publishing Houses in London and Toronto, we gratefully acknowledge courteous and generous permission to use illustrations which add so much to the interest and value of these pages.

RECOLLECTIONS

BY THE REV. I. E. PAGE

SO complete is the characterization of my dear friend given in this volume, that little is necessary on my part except, may be, a few reminiscences.

Our friendship began thus. Early in 'the seventies,' *The King's Highway*, of which I was editor, was printed at Frome by the well-known firm of Butler & Tanner. As the proofs reached me month by month it became evident that the reader was not only a scholarly man of wide information, but one who took lively interest in that aspect of spiritual life to which the magazine was devoted. Now and again a suggested alteration in an exposition of scripture was made—always modestly—in the margin, or reference given to a book where an appropriate illustration might be found.

Presently a personal note accompanying the proofs led to correspondence, which began a much valued friendship extending through many following years.

The first occasion of our meeting cannot be recalled, but it was probably at Wakefield in 1874, when he suddenly appeared on the scene, as was his wont, dropping among his friends as though from the clouds. Brought thus into personal contact, I found myself in fellowship with a Christian man of strong original mind, wide knowledge, and an altogether unselfish spirit.

Our correspondence, though ever cordial, was intermittent, until his residence in Palestine and his heroic work in Kerak. We met only at intervals until a serious breakdown in health at Blackheath laid me aside. Then my friend came to the rescue and obtained for me an

invitation to spend some weeks with Mr. Tonkin, of Frome, in whose house the invalid received the greatest kindness, and there we had opportunity for daily intercourse. He showed me over the printing works, explaining all the processes. We had many pleasant hours together in the evenings when he was free from the duties of his office.

Two incidents of that time stand out in memory, a Sunday in the country and a trip to Ilfracombe. Norton St. Phillip, as the memoir shows, was the sphere of long and persistent effort to resuscitate a village church. To this place we started early on the Sunday morning, carrying 'our daily bread' in our pockets. It was a lovely day, and our journey led us through delightful scenes and along field paths. It is easy, even at this distance of time, to recall the old-fashioned village chapel, the small Sunday School, the two homely services, and the long homeward journey which my friend, unwearied, enlivened by varied conversation. How full his mind was of interest in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! To me that was an unforgettable day; to him, one of many in which in all weathers, and at lavish expenditure of strength, he 'held the fort' alone.

During my stay with him a visit was made to Longleat, the magnificent seat of the Marquis of Bath, where we more admired the landscape than the glories of the house.

But the event of that time was our visit to Ilfracombe during the Whitsuntide holidays. Only such a man as he could have planned an excursion, crowding into a few days, so much of interest. Everything was carefully arranged. During a waiting interval at Exeter, we noticed the presence of many policemen in the station, and Mr. Lethaby found, on enquiry, that the Prince and Princess of Wales were passing through in "The Flying Dutchman" on their way to Cornwall, to lay the

foundation stone of Truro Cathedral. My friend ascertained at which spot the royal carriage would stop, and we were able, in close proximity, to see our future King and Queen.

Thence we went to Barnstaple, and by coach to Ilfracombe. We occupied the same room, sleeping very little, and next day surveyed the neighbourhood. My name had been suggested to the Ilfracombe stewards as a London minister who would need a quiet circuit. So, having left our names, we called upon one of the officials with an amusing result. It was evident that persons of consequence were expected. We were ushered into the drawing-room and waited. But our appearance was against us—the minister in unministerial attire, his face haggard with illness—his companion very shabbily dressed. We were taken for impostors. A short interview ended in our escape from the embarrassing situation and a hearty laugh on the beach. Alas for appearances! But how William Lethaby cared for his sick friend during those days cannot be forgotten.

There is no need to refer to our correspondence during the Kerak period. At the time of my residence in Bolton (1883-1886), the *Methodist Recorder* published various letters which 'W.L.' had sent me—letters which greatly interested the late James Barlow, J.P., of blessed memory. One day I received a note from Mr. B. saying that during a wakeful night his thoughts had been with the brave man working in Moab, and that he was prepared to pay the expense of printing a selection, in pamphlet form, to send to the Local Preachers of Methodism, that they might know what one of themselves was doing for Christ and His Kingdom. Would I undertake the work?

The pamphlet was prepared, circuit plans were obtained, and 17,000 copies were thus distributed at Mr. B.'s expense. One result was the formation of a 'Council'

of three—Revs. W. Arthur, Geo. Piercy and myself—to aid in carrying on the work. James Barlow has gone, and the saintly William Arthur; but the work they did for their fellow soldier has eternity written upon it. “He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Mr. Lethaby was present at the Local Preachers Aggregate Meeting in Bristol in 1907, entering into the business of that great Association, and conversing with old friends. Characteristically, he carried with him a catalogue of books belonging to the widow of an aged minister, to dispose of them for her, if he could.

Next year, at the Hull Aggregate Meeting, we met once more, and for the last time. He looked worn and aged. My reporting duties were exacting, and I had but little time for friendly intercourse. But we sat together at the public tea and secured at least one walk along the crowded thoroughfares. It is comforting now to remember that I made grateful reference to his services to the magazine as he sat among his brethren. Would that in those last interviews I had made more of my friend.

William Lethaby was remarkable alike as a man and a Christian. I know not whether to admire most his lifelong devotion to the interests of Jesus Christ, his absolute unselfishness, his labours amid unparalleled difficulties, or his faith in God, which was the mainspring of all. Regrets are vain now he has gone from us; but oh, that I had treasured every letter he wrote, and especially in his later days, had written him oftener and more comfortingly. A noble and heroic soul, it will be seen one day how much his laborious life accomplished for the Kingdom of his Lord.

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PART I
BEFORE KERA



THE NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL, EXETER

'The big church' (Exeter Cathedral) "made me happy We went to hear the music, and little boy demons sang so that it was as if Heaven opened for a bit . . and I wished that I could see it; and wished and wished."

EDWARD BURNE-JONES.

CHAPTER I

Beginnings. 1837-1871

THE "Sitt" is now at the tent door, looking wistfully towards the sun-rising; her "Khowadja" has disappeared in the "land of far-distances"; and she awaits the morning, for are they not pledged to meet again at the break of day!

She recalls the long series of incidents belonging to a much-chequered life. To them both, Moab became a sort of hub in the great life wheel, and much revolved round it or led into it.

Friends were often arrested by Mr. Lethaby's sudden appearance in their midst, but hardly astonished. It might be at six o'clock in the morning that he knocked or rang at the front door, and the startled maid announced that a man, who looked as if he had been walking all night, and was awfully shabby, had called. This might happen at any time between, say, 1874 and

1904—in Rome or Rochdale, Paris or Philadelphia, Toronto or Tiberias, Jerusalem or Jaffa, Birmingham or Bethlehem, Bolton or Beirût, Aden or Alexandria, Sidmouth or Sychar. But one thing was sure—an “angel was entertained unawares.” No conventional angel certainly. Yet, deep down, the angel was always to be found.

But, like the man of Samoa,

“He loved of life the myriad sides—
Pain, prayer, or pleasure, act, or sleep,
As wallowing narwhals love the deep.”

And as his biographer says of this same R.L.S. : “No man was ever less inclined to take anything at second-hand. . . . An instinctive and inbred unwillingness to accept the accepted and conform to the conventional was of the essence of his character”; so in matters of conformity, as of conscience, nothing can be truer of this man of Kerak.

And this is also singularly apt: “He was a man of great heart and tender conscience, a man of eager appetite and curiosity . . . impatient of restraints and shams; the adventurer and lover of travel and action.” These are exact lineaments of our friend, whose whole life is a commentary on them.

Although Lethaby, of Kerak, had no love for the mustiness of antiquity for its own sake, he had

much interest in the name he bore. And this is the tradition he found on the authority of Vestegan :—

“One Lothbroke, a noble Dane, whose hawk took her flight sea-ward, took a little cock-boat to follow her, and was driven by contrary winds to the coast of Norfolk, where, by King Edmund, he was well entertained. But Beric, the king’s falconer, from envy, murdered him in a wood, and the body, by his spaniel, was found out.

“Then they abused his carcase by dragging it up and down in derision, calling him, in scorn, ‘Lothbroc,’” a term of indignity—this Time has graciously softened to “Lethaby.”

Certainly, one may well believe that some of the “Lothbroc” intrepid, high-mettled blood may have run in William Lethaby’s veins. His little cock-boat was often fearlessly launched on troubled waters and driven by contrary winds, while his person came to be, not infrequently, treated with derision and with scorn. But he endured well, and was undismayed to the end.

WILLIAM LETHABY first saw the light in the city of Exeter, June 9th, 1837. His father, Richard Lethaby, was a printer of repute, and a lay preacher of the Methodist Church.

The father, removing to London when William was only two or three years of age, the boy was left at Exeter in the care of his paternal grandmother. The old lady had lost her own son William at the

age of twenty. His memory she fondly cherished, and it was her will that the little grandson should inherit the love that of right belonged to the lad who, seized with cramp, was drowned whilst bathing in the Exe. So the wealth of grandmotherly love was lavishly poured out upon this little lad.

From granny there is no doubt his character had its earliest moulding. That was his own belief, certainly. In their long walks together she taught him to love Nature; and in their cosy Scripture readings began the charmed and devout attachment to the Holy Book, to which he continued passionately loyal. He was well taught by his grandmother to get to the roots of things.

With his boy friend, Charles Bradley, he loved to go into the Cathedral Close, and, as opportunity offered, into the Cathedral itself, where not only were his religious instincts quickened, and his musical tastes influenced, but an unconscious foundation was laid for antiquarian interest and research which stayed with him right through. Nor was he unaffected by social visits with granny to the home circle of prominent folk, where matters of public concern were talked over. In the Mint Sunday School some of the lower strata were placed in the superstructure of Scripture knowledge, which, in after years, became so goodly a building.

At nine he entered Exeter Grammar School, with Dr. Mills as headmaster, and proved an apt

and successful pupil. He very unwillingly submitted to a removal in his early teens. But he was already studying Greek and Latin, with the usual English subjects, under Dr. Mills, and seems to have promised himself, and partially projected, a college course.

Meanwhile, he had saved up his pence, and bought an old copy of Van Der Hooght's Hebrew Bible, which he read privately. These early ambitions were destined to disappointment. But he never really gave up, although his struggles towards a student's life were, from the first, thwarted where they should, naturally, have been encouraged. There was "variance" on the point, about which neither father nor son could feel quite comfortable. But William dared to correspond with Dr. Davidson, the then professor of Hebrew at Oxford. The Professor helpfully encouraged the lad; but the father decided that he must go to London and earn his living like the rest of them. That old Hebrew Bible was, fifty years later, after devoted use, laid to rest with other portly companions, in the Allan Library.

This eagerness for knowledge never forsook him; and always when his steps led him to his cherished Exeter, to the closing months of his ever-changing life, he lingered fondly in the midst of reminders of these earliest eager days.

On his removal to London in 1851, William was apprenticed under his father to the art and craft of

a printer at Messrs. Clowes & Sons, then at 14 Charing Cross.

Richard Lethaby had bought the short lease of a house in Savoy Street, Strand, close to the Savoy Palace and Church, both of which had an interest for the young printer.

Working hours were long and rules stringent, but, lithe as he was, he not infrequently got up at half-past four, and before breakfast would walk as far as Sydenham or the Highgate Woods.

He did not look to any special moment as the time of his "conversion." But the fact was very real to him; and he always felt deeply the urgency of such a period in every man's spiritual history. He was conscious of deliberately yielding his will to Christ. He attended the ministry of the Rev. John Kirk at Waterloo Road, Lambeth, and this church became the centre of his religious activities. Accepting the Truth heartily and intelligently, he immediately entered into the joy of Christian work. With but little time for study, he gave himself seriously and strenuously to personal improvement and availed himself with avidity of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society at China Terrace, Lambeth. There remain three of his carefully thought-out, virile papers on subjects to which his instinct directed him. They are entitled, "The punishment of the children for the sins of their fathers," "The mind of man," and "On the study of sacred languages." These

extremely thoughtful papers must have meant not a little expenditure of midnight oil.

During the years of apprenticeship the irrepressible youth unwittingly found himself in the pleasant toils of laborious home mission work of a very real type. He came in contact with a spiritually and socially impoverished people, and taxed himself severely in seeking their betterment. To out-door preaching he added Sunday School teaching for both sessions. It was necessarily very much of a rule to take his Sunday lunch in the chapel vestry, to avoid three long walks as well as the payment of pence over Waterloo or Hungerford Bridge. This tension could not continue with impunity.

There were, fortunately, compensations during this strain. He discovered the Goodson family among his fellow worshippers and workers. Jane had made herself conspicuous in good work, and William Lethaby went out 'at eventide to meditate'—not always alone. Miss Goodson and he found themselves of one heart, and ere long mutually confessed themselves willing to follow one way.

When our friend, in age and infirmity, preached his *last* sermon at Kenton in December, 1908, it was remembered as his preaching jubilee—his first sermon having been preached at Waterloo Road, at a week-night service, in December, 1858.

The apprenticeship at Clowes' came to an end in 1858, when he was twenty-one ; but he consented to remain with the firm for a further term of three years as compositor and assistant reader. At that moment there was a call for young men to give themselves to the wonderful work then going on in the South Sea Islands, particularly in Fiji, which was yielding itself to the uplifted Cross. This attracted Lethaby, and he would have gladly gone but for the family veto. By a natural affinity, too, he was drawn to the movement which nowabouts had its birth, for promoting larger systematic Christian giving. Dr. Cather, an enthusiastic Irish minister, gave himself to this Mission, and founded the "Systematic Beneficence Society." Lethaby offered him six months' help, and attended the Camborne Conference of 1862 with his chief.

The termination of the lease of the Savoy house in 1861 was a family crisis. William married, and the father with the rest of them removed to Sidmouth, which hereafter became the family centre.

Each morning of the working week saw William Lethaby walking from his home in Northampton Square, with rapid stride, along the pavement towards his work at Amen Corner, reading the *Morning Star*, one of the earliest penny papers, with the liberal sentiments of which the "reader" was in almost perfect sympathy.

The engagement with Needhams was followed

by a brief term with Spottiswoode's, but his state of health did not allow of its continuance. Recruitment became urgent both for himself and his wife. After a sojourn in Jersey and Guernsey both rallied, but it was evident that London was unsuitable for their residence. The West of England was recommended, and as a first step the husband gravitated to his grandmother in his native city.

In the course of that visit, Messrs. Butler and Tanner, who had then the beginnings of their big printing works in Frome, and had heard of this accurate and painstaking 'reader,' offered him a responsible post. He could take his own time, come as soon as he felt fit, and begin with short hours until he was equal to full work. This was providential and attractive, and Frome came to be their home, with intervals of absence, for seventeen years.

Mr. Lethaby, still little more than a walking skeleton, here resumed his weekly seven days' toil.

The grandmother, for whom he had profound and loving reverence, "went Home from Exeter," as the gravestone, in the grandson's words, records, October 8th, 1866.

A daily register, covering many years, began at this time, and chronicles chiefly his intimate church relations and his many activities, particularly the preaching engagements, which practically touched three-fourths or more of his Sundays. There are many pulpit notes of sermons, largely

expository and practical, as there are also careful lists of the subjects taken in these varied and never-ceasing ministrations. Tiny pages, three inches by five, noting these services, illustrate at once the difficulties and peculiarities of his caligraphy, and the persistent system which came into all he did, notwithstanding his chronic topsyturviness. They show the variety of subjects which he treated; and the notes indicate his mode of preparation and the pulpit aids of which he availed himself.

.

In this earliest period at Frome he was brought into contact with a number of, then, prominent authors, including Dr. Fausset, Dr. Stoughton, and others, whose works were printed at Selwood and passed in the natural course through his hands. One of the earliest, and by no means the least interesting of such associations, was the literary intercourse he had, unsought, with Frances Ridley Havergal. The correspondence assumed in course of time a sympathetic exchange of religious thought and feeling. Here is one of many letters from this saintly and discriminating correspondent:—

“On receiving a proof two days ago from Messrs. B. & T., corrected by some other hand than W.L.’s, I returned it, asking Mr. T. if he would oblige me by letting W.L. glance over it, as his reading was so different from anything else in my experience, that I would be easy about the perfect correctness of anything

Feb. 18 - "But": The time of the summer was
all gone; yet time to say what we have, but we
have this 10 years.

See the picture - the workers for and
the children with Christ

of Calvary: it is a gift from above, especially
to the natural gift man has, with transformation
in new use

There - ability to work in various ways, not
the complete absence of others - it is for
us to be able to work for others. As for
us, our relations and growth with the Father
are in Christ as Bishop of Christendom -
see above in this place - so it remains
in our own day - that this necessary
growth in grace - power over sin, power
over the world, power with God, power with
man

After that, etc. - rather to have for power with
the Spirit - perhaps we have com-
mon sense of how useful - Confess
the principle "how" with "not" may be like
the application now to the church as outside
to our own Christian, that to confess
this soul - need of power, desire for
power, constant of power, need of the power,
gift of the power.

Date	Hours	Chapters	First Words
Budget 1897 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1898 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1899 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1900 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1901 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1902 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1903 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1904 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
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1978 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1979 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1980 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1981 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1982 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1983 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1984 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1985 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1986 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1987 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1988 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1989 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1990 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1991 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1992 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1993 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1994 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1995 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1996 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1997 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1998 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
1999 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning
2000 Jan 3	11.0	Jan. 15	This is the beginning

which had passed under his eye. I did this that he might know how other people appreciated you."

Referring to proofs of "Songs of Grace and Glory," she says, May 13th, 1870 :—

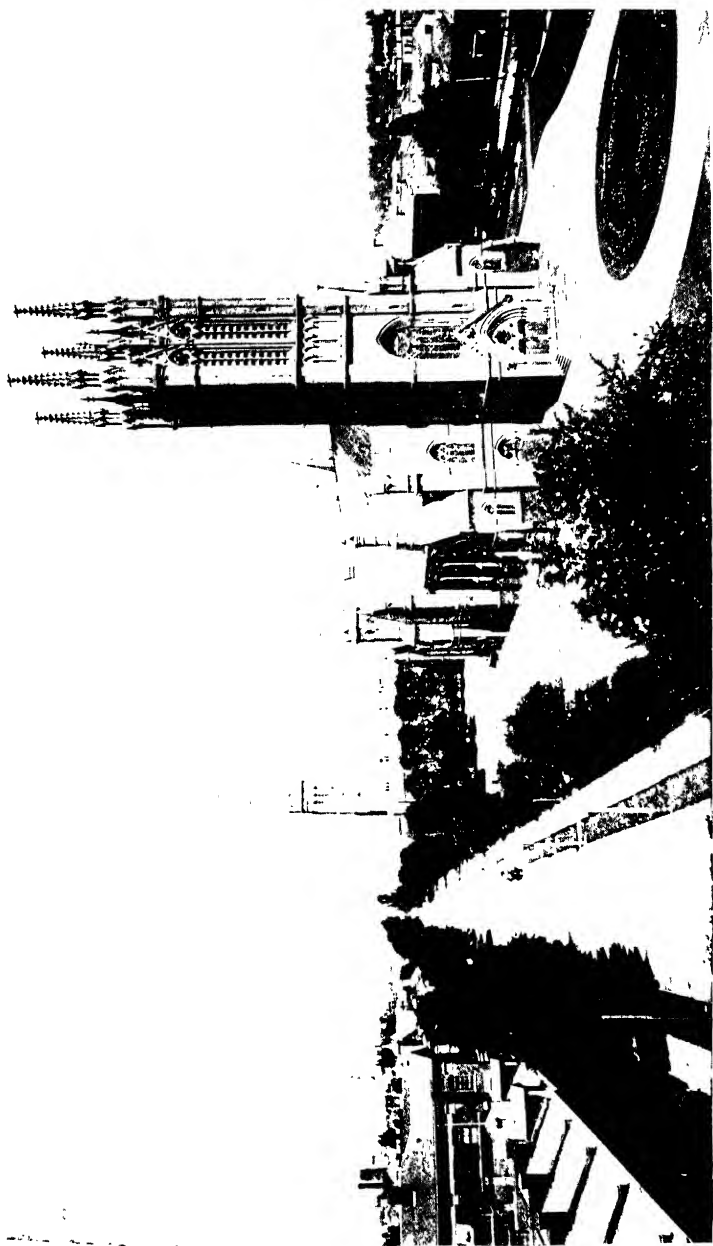
"I think it would be a grand opportunity for teaching people to use and not abuse 'Amens' ! Therefore don't you think it would be good to put the musical 'Amen' whenever the hymn is one of prayer, praise or aspiration, and not when 'Amen' is irrelevant ?

"So many think '*Such a blessing*' rank heresy. I can't help that. I can't *not* see what I have seen and *do* see. And if '*all*' in 1 John i. 7 doesn't mean all, how much does it mean ? And if 'cleanseth' only means 'cleansed' when I said my prayers last night, what force is there in tenses ? . . . I know that it is not 'perfection' or 'perfectionism,' because if it were, I should not need and desire and claim that wonderful, perpetual, present tense,—'goes on cleansing.' "

Another of W.L.'s professional pleasures during this first Frome period was the "reading" in his overtime of the proofs of Dr. Osborn's edition of the "Wesley Poetry." It was a lengthened source of interest, and eventually appeared in fifteen volumes. It meant also a piquant correspondence with Dr. Osborn, who, at the close of what had been a time of delectation, as much to the "Editor" as the "Reader," sent Mr. Lethaby a complete set of the volumes and a cheque, indicating the Doctor's estimate of the services his friend had rendered him.

Health improved, as he gave every possible moment to open air exercise. But by the end of 1871 he found himself again incapable of taking night work, and had serious thoughts of giving up his position altogether. His principals generously offered three months' leave of absence, which was accepted gratefully; but it ultimately turned out to be an absence of something like two years and a half.





THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH, TORONTO.

"In order from the outset to save as much as possible, he made the journey in the steerage and the emigrants' train. With the prime motive of economy was combined a second, that of learning for himself the pinch of life as it is felt by the unprivileged and the poor."

COLVIN OF R.L.S.

CHAPTER II

Westward. 1872-1873

THE interval from 1872 to 1874 was full of interest and excitement, and had much to do in shaping the later period of missionary work towards which his face was being unconsciously turned.

He was looking westwards, and determined, if possible, to find temporary engagement in his profession in some of the big centres in the States and Canada. The wife had family associations in the far West States, and this decided the initial step. He secured letters of introduction to the house of Lippincott in Philadelphia, to Lowell Mason, and to other persons of influence in Toronto and elsewhere.

Toronto came first. Lethaby had been introduced in England to Dr. Alexander Sutherland, a past Fernley Lecturer, who became their pastor at Sherborne Street Church. Almost at once he was able to close with an offer of several months'

work at the Methodist Publishing House. He found himself in a most congenial circle, and as was his wont, energetically employed. One of the earliest welcomes was from Dr. Punshon, whom, almost the first Sunday, he met in the Vestry of the Metropolitan Church with Dr. Gervase Smith, Dr. T. B. Stephenson, and Dr. Sutherland, then in the heyday of their ministerial manhood, and who were rejoicing together "like a lot of happy schoolboys."

There was a brief but important comradeship in Toronto with the Rev. George Cochran, an enthusiast touched with Missionary fever, which Lethaby found infectious. Cochran was of the devout and unselfish David Hill type, and gave himself soul and body to foreign work. He was drawn to Japan long before it was open and free, and he had the privilege of starting the Canadian Methodist Mission in that interesting land.

Lethaby's work in Toronto was never considered other than a stage in the American pilgrimage. Correspondence with Philadelphia was soon opened, and issued in an offer from Lippincotts of a position in their Readers' Room at £5 a week. Dr. Dewart recommended an immediate acceptance.

So the husband moved at once towards Philadelphia and made no effort to resist the temptation of seeing Niagara on the way. To the astonishment and momentary dismay of the wife, Lethaby, "with a kindled look," reappeared the

next day in the Toronto home. "What has happened?" enquired the startled spouse. "I have seen *Niagara!*" was the reply. He could not continue his journey until he had relieved his overburden of astonished joy at this immense trick of Nature. Its awesomeness was oppressive. There was no one with whom to share the supercargo of adjectives which rushed to his bewildered mind. He had to climb down from the sublime to the common-place. For such an experience Lethaby could not bear to be alone,—this man of lonely tramps and solitary musings! But he had no love of the word "farewell" either. The fact is, he was a perpetual paradox even to those who knew him best.

But he soon started again, and was followed by his wife three weeks later. The new home, in Philadelphia, was next to the old St. George's Methodist Church,—a place hallowed by association with Francis Asbury, Richard Pilmoor, and others.

Business and Church and home were soon adjusted, and a new series of enterprises was entered on. Extras clustered thickly as usual. A wave of conviction at that moment flooded the city in connection with the astonishing initiatory work of the World's Women Temperance Association. Mr. Lethaby was duly licensed as a lay preacher in the Union Methodist Episcopal Church. Among his engagements he visited the Moya-Mensing Prisons, the Poor Asylums, and

kindred institutions. In such enjoyable activities the fifteen months of residence in the city of Philadelphia quickly passed.

His reading during 1872 included "Augustine's Confessions," and the "Life of Ignatius," by Gemelli. Of the former he says:—"This is a strange, unique book with old-new thoughts, but not on the whole tending to a higher view of Augustine's mental and spiritual status. He to the last was a self-anatomist, credulous and superstitious in many matters. The choicest pieces are about his mother; and one of the finest of these a conversation with her about 'entering into the joy of the Lord.'" Of the life of Ignatius he speaks:—"It is an enlightening and interesting work. He was a wonderful man, more like Wesley than any other, but not 'homo unius libri'; he was rather 'unius ecclesiæ.' The book is full of Romish twisted phrases." Of "Browning's *Dramatis Personæ*," he writes:—"A very pleasing book, worth reading over and over, which almost every page requires. The ground tint is generally a sad one." Referring to "Curious Myths of the Middle Age," by Baring Gould, he calls it "a very strange book with very much information, but with lots of assumptions."

These notes from the end of the diary for 1872 may stand once and for all as indicating his life habit of keeping as far as possible thoughtfully abreast with current literature.

In the pocket of the same diary is a note endorsed "Autograph of the Hon. John Bigelow, United States Minister to Paris." The note is addressed to the "Reader" (W.L.), and concludes, "I therefore leave the matter to your discretion, satisfied from my brief experience that it could not be in better hands.—J.B." Lethaby was still earning "a good report."

Mr. Lewis, a West of England friend, in an "appreciation" contributed to the *Somerset and Wilts Journal*, February 5th, 1909, is pithily reminiscent of this Philadelphia period. He says :—"He was a voluminous note-taker, and methodically recorded all his wanderings and adventures. One or two incidents in his American experience I remember. . . One of the works which came under his hand for correction dealt with the comparatively recent Civil War and with the controversies which arose out of it. The author was a Southerner, and in Mr. Lethaby's opinion, made an unscrupulous and malignant attack on the Northern policy. He was, of course, a supporter of slavery. From his knowledge of history and facts of the question, Mr. Lethaby made many queries on the proofs of the book. One day a member of the firm brought a gentleman into his room and introduced him as 'the man who is reading your proof.' Hands were shaken, when suddenly, to Mr. Lethaby's horror, it dawned upon him that this was the advocate of slavery. Rushing to the corner of the room, where there

was a hand-basin, he vigorously washed his hands, exclaiming, 'Had I known you were the writer of that atrocious book, sir, I would not have touched your hand.' The author took it in good part, and replied, 'I guess you and I shan't agree about that book, but I want to thank you all the same for your care and accuracy in reading it.' In another book on which he was engaged a writer had introduced the quotation from Shakespeare, 'And to the manner born,' but had written 'manor.' This was promptly corrected; but the author on returning the proof, re-wrote 'manor,' angrily asking why it had been altered. Mr. Lethaby politely intimated that that was how Shakespeare wrote it; to which the author, possibly a Baconian, replied, 'Shakespeare be —, I say 'manor,' and actually appended a foot-note explaining that the term was reminiscent of feudalism, and meant to be born on or within the manor!"

He was haunted by a latent passion, which not a few Bible students beside Lethaby have found themselves possessed with—the desire to visit and see for himself the arena of Sacred History. There was also creeping over him, he hardly knew how or why, an impulse to mission the native Arab population of Syria, for whom he discovered little had been done. He had in fact been carefully husbanding his means during comparatively prosperous months with such a "prospecting" journey in view,

First of all they determined to visit their kinsfolk at St. Paul's, Minnesota. On this outward journey they were detained six hours at Chicago, and had a memorable opportunity of seeing the recently burnt-out city. As welcome guests, they then spent a number of pleasurable days at St. Paul. Almost at the last moment, after his immediate plans had been made, he had the offer of sharing fortunes with the far-west settlers in Minnesota, who were anxious to make him their "itinerant" preacher, promising to provide him with a horse, and guaranteeing a competent stipend. But the lure was now towards the sun-rising, and thither he once again turned his face. It was decided that the wife should remain with her sister and family, while the adventurous husband entered on his quest in the Orient, *viâ* England. So he returned to Philadelphia to wind up affairs with his firm and friends.

There is an interesting note under date August 3rd, 1910, from Mr. J. B. McCreary, of Philadelphia, a contemporary of Lethaby at Messrs. Lippincott. In recalling "facts of years ago as one sees them now," he says:—

"Mr. Lethaby was regarded here as a man of exceptional literary ability—always faithful to duty, always studious; ever ready, ever critical. It was commonly said that fewer errors, typographical or grammatical—fewer misconstructions or irregularities of expression, escaped his watchful eye, than the eye of any of those how, with him, guarded the style of the Lippincott press.

He was a Christian gentleman and scholar ; and his religious instincts and devotion led him afterward to the illustrious cause of seeking to save his fellow-men in the far-off Moab."

On Tuesday, December 9th, 1873, 12.30 noon, he found himself in the same cabin of the *City of London* s.s., in which his wife had come West two years before. But wind and wave were not propitious. He wrote from the steerage cabin 10th December :—

"Monday was a very bad day ; so was Tuesday. But on Saturday by dusk a sail was torn by the wind. At half-past ten the gale snapped the yard-arm of the main-mast like a bit of firewood, though it was 4ft. 6in. in circumference. At midnight most of the men were up and swamped—women screaming generally. So it continued all night, and all day Sunday until night came. . . Both afternoon and evening services were held, the place as full as it could hold. We sang familiar hymns to old English tunes. All day the sight was terrible. On the deck the waves seemed to be leaping after us like live mountains—dark thundering masses that every now and then, for a long twenty-four hours, made every bolt quiver."

On Christmas Day they landed in Liverpool, and the next day he was again at Sidmouth.

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The whole question of the future was reopened. Henceforward he was fiercely attacked with Palestine on the brain ; although a decade passed

before his full dream was realised. With a misty outlook he gave himself straight away to the preliminary prospecting of the near East, upon which he had set his heart.



"You can tell the life of those who have fought and won, and been beaten, because it is clear and definite. . . . My life is what I long for, and love, and regret, and desire."

EDWARD BURNES-JONES.

CHAPTER III

Eastward and Back. 1874

BY Thursday, New Year's Day, 1874, 8 p.m., he was in London Bridge Station on the way to Newhaven and Dieppe. "This is really the wind-up," he says, "my passport has a Turkish *visè*, and I have a whole heap of information from the Secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund." He spent a memorable Sunday in Paris. At Macon the Monday was bitterly cold; and at Culoz all was feeling and looking Alpine, but he rejoiced in the beautifully clear moonlight, and the "bit of wonderful travel" as he hurried on through Mont Cenis to Turin. The Wednesday at Genoa charmed him as he saw on the 7th January "oranges growing in the open, with all sorts of cactus-like vegetation." Thence he passed to Leghorn by boat, on foot to Pisa, and by Thursday evening "walked the real streets of the identic city of the Cæsars," through which he wandered many hours on Friday, and towards evening found himself in the dining-room of the



THE DOG RIVER. BIERÛT (PLACE OF INSCRIPTIONS).

Rev. H. J. Piggott in Via Scrofa. Then he tells us:—

“I heard Sciarelli on Sunday Evening. To know Rome you must be a burrower for years. Now I am looking rather impatiently for a real start eastward.”

He was ready on Monday, and at Naples on Wednesday recorded:—

“I had a wonderful walk along the Appian Way from Rome to Velletri. I shall never forget that walk. None in the world can compare with it. The mountains were just as you see the effects of the best stereoscopes. The air is so clear—a feather would seem to be visible a mile distant. . . . Vesuvius has been before me for hours this morning. This Naples is a passing strange place.

“A fortnight yesterday I left Sidmouth. How much pleasure, and comparatively speaking, how little pain and money has it cost. This city defies everything I have seen to equal it. The noise you cannot conceive. ‘New Cut,’ on Saturday night, goes a little towards it, but only a little. Goldsmith Street, Exeter, would be a wide street here, and yet there are many, many shops worthy of Regent Street. . . . A pole of a carriage may impale you wherever you are, for there are no side-paths. When you are out of doors you want to be in, and when you are in you want to be out to see what is going on.

“At the Museo Nazionale, I found the very choicest Museum delicacies, and enjoyed it far more than the Vatican.

“*Thursday afternoon, 22nd.* On board the boat for Alexandria. Since Saturday I have had times of practical martyrdom, and sympathised with St. Lawrence on his

gridiron. . . There has been more privation and hardship in this bit of a voyage than from continent to continent. But Sunday was fresh and beautiful.

"*Saturday, 9.30 a.m., Alexandria.* Last night I walked about for two hours until the dogs and the general nocturnal aspect of the streets drove me in. Alas! mosquitoes—fat tropical fellows—worried me awfully.

"*Cairo.* I find myself an hour's walk from where Moses went courting. Ran the gauntlet of the donkeys for two and a half hours. I mean to-morrow to be Sabbath.

"On board the *Scamarada*, towards Suez, words grew into this form early this morning :—

TO THE EAST!

To the East! to the East! to the land of our birth,
When our fathers and grandfathers peopled the earth;
Where the brickfields of Babel still testify how
They practised what we call philology now.

To the East! to the East! where Moses began
To write down the message delivered to man;
And where in "God's Acre" the Archangel alone
Looked down on the grave to mortals unknown.

Enough! let me walk through the land that Christ trod
My Brother, my Friend, my Saviour, my God;
I'm not superstitious, but surely 'tis worth
More than wealth can express to tread the same earth.

"On Wednesday (28th) I was as thoroughly lost in three minutes as if in a desert. For an hour and a half the Arabs, the dogs, the lanes were all I saw . . . Nobody that could speak French or English in all this labyrinth of narrow streets! At last I got into a place

I recognised, and to the station at nine thoroughly exhausted. . . I am told by everyone that a walk to Gaza would be impracticable. From Port Said it is sandy desert—almost entirely without water or good resting places; but it *can* be done riding they say.

“*January 29th.* My digestive apparatus complained of overtime and overwork, and this morning is on strike!

“I have been shut up for a week in Port Said waiting for a boat to Syria, and am glad to read back numbers of the *Graphic* from headline to imprint. Hard lines, indeed! but have alternated with a real pitch into Arabic. I am really seeing the East, but how thankful shall I be to get to Mount Zion.

“This morning I visited an Arab village a mile away; a scene of rags, rottenness and utter degradation. It was a Muhammadan festival—flying games, swings, and monkeys and sweetstuffs. I am able to illustrate the money enigma, as I find in my purse a half-medjideh, a half-piastre, and a piastre in Turkish money, two Egyptian piastres and thirty-five francs, an English penny, shilling and farthing, one half-rouble of Russian, and forty centimes of French and Italian currency. . . The beach here is the finest for sand and shell I ever walked on, and the breeze has been most refreshing. . . Whatever you or others may think, I am fully convinced that my vocation is *not* that of a traveller. It is of no use to talk about plans when experience shows that I cannot make a programme for a fortnight ahead that works.

“*Saturday afternoon, 5 p.m.* A Beirût in reality is worth two Jaffas in imagination. How glad I am to be again on my way. Surely God was in this place, so I may expect to find His angels . . . I am bound for Beirût. Our boat, the *Kassed Krune*, belonging to a rich

Muhammadan of Alexandria, has a commander of a Turkish man-of-war on board with the captain. I am glad to find the chief engineer, Mr. Williams, is an Englishman.

"Our boat has had an attack of St. Vitus' dance. How I sympathise with Jonah! We have had an awful pestle and mortar experience; Sunday night and Monday morning things were at their worst.

"At 3 p.m. I got into the biggest *fight* of my life. The sea was still strong, though we were sheltered a little by Cape Ras, Beirût. Fancy sitting on the bulwarks, legs over, and dropping down *perhaps* into the boat, *perhaps* into the sea. Then a fight in real earnest; the captain's fists and my stick and legs prevailed, and I was dragged into the same boat with him. Then a switchback mountainous boat-ride . . . then a jump up on to a big boulder. I fell, but about fifty arms caught stick, shawl, bag, and self."

And so our traveller landed at Beirût; and on the second day met a man after his own heart:—

"Mr. W. D. Pritchett, who goes about distributing the Scriptures to the Arabs. He carries no arms; has never been robbed, although he has been amongst the worst. He has settled as a missionary at Gaza, and wishes me to recommend the field to the W.M.S., and to go down and see the place before I return. . . His father was a clergyman in London, Charterhouse Square, and Bishop Stortford. I had a most pleasant evening with him."

This was the beginning of an intimate and valued life friendship, which greatly influenced Mr. Lethaby henceforward.

The next day he writes:—

"The sea is roaring right under my eye; all night long

it plays the bass-viol. The situation of this place is glorious ; snowy Lebanon coming down to within a few miles of us ; it is altogether charming. I have had a walk on the Damascus Road to Bishop Kingsley's grave (A.M.E.). As for the future, I must 'give it up,' for there's no knowing 'what a day may bring forth.' I have visited the Syrian College with the Principal. It was a most pleasant drive, as was the inspection and my host's courtesy."

The stay in Beirût was unwittingly prolonged. But, he says :—

"I am getting an amount of information I never anticipated. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday I saw Dr. Bliss, of the American College, and went to his English-Arabic service. The reading was very enjoyable, and not less was the walk to the Dog River, with the inscriptions and tablets dating from old Assyrian times to those of modern France and the first Napoleon.

"At 10.30 Monday evening we steamed off, and Tuesday morning's light showed the coast beautifully. Between two and three p.m. we dropped anchor off Jaffa. Then, again, such a scene—almost a fatal one. Winds, waves, and Arabs made it alarming enough, and I was thankful to be again 'vomited on dry land,' and to find Muallim Muraud, Mr. Pritchett's friend. At the Prussian Schools, too, I met the young Englishman whom I was to go to Gaza to see. . . What would you say to thirty-two oranges, about the size of a baby's head, for twopence ? "

Then came the tramp to Jerusalem :—

"After a brief rest and talk at the 'House Beautiful' came that 'fearful valley of the shadow' before Ramleh was reached at eight. . . At five a.m. began the

tug-of-war, which resulted in my accomplishing the whole distance on foot in a little under twenty-four hours, in spite of chasms and ditches and mountains. The horses and mules of the well-provided parties came in about an hour after me. . . Everybody said: 'Go to the Prussian Hospice.' I came and found there were two classes, and was asked if I was a poor man. Of course I was; and as what I have left won't run to five francs a day for all the time I mean to stay, I took the harsh alternative of *paying nothing*, which is all that is asked.

"This morning's walk was to the Mount of Olives . . this one sight repays for all. . . The feather I picked up near the summit is from a raven or some such bird.

"Yesterday I called on Mr. Drake of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and Lieutenant Conder, Captain Warren's successor.

"As to this Jerusalem, it is at once the most repulsive and the most attractive. The sun and the snow, the rain and the general want of water, are all distinguishing marks. Among its strange, tortuous, narrow ways only one street has a side path on a portion of it, and that not wider than the length of my stick.

"*Saturday evening, Feb. 14th.* Yesterday I got round outside the gate from Damascus to the Dung Gate, which might be the generic name of every gate. . . At Dr. D.'s store I have tried in vain to dry my feet; but I have had access to the "Eclipse of Faith" and the "Land and the Book" and "Alford's Greek Testament."

"*Wednesday, 19th.* I have been to the Dead Sea and back. For one who had never got on a saddle before, to do what I have done since Monday! It has been a glorious time, but for me horribly painful. My companions in travel—a dozen of them—were almost as angular as the beast I rode.

"*21st and 22nd.* After dinner I reached Bethlehem-Judah in an hour and a half, and was astonished to find myself believing that I really was at the scene of *the Nativity*. Before dark I had been to the Frank Mountain, Herodium and Beth Haccерim, where there is a magnificent prospect.

"*Sunday.* Read the whole of the Prolegomena of Alford's Greek Testament. Heard the Bishop. He is seventy-five. In the afternoon to the tomb of the kings beyond the Damascus Gate, then back to finish Alford. In the evening round the end of Olivet, and had a delightful view of the city and of the other side. Talked with Mr. Mandesley, C.E., who is here attempting to help these rascals, but they won't be helped. 'Allah is great, and Mohammed is his prophet,' he says, is the end of it all. . . This is probably my last Sunday in the Holy Land.

"*Monday evening.* In many respects the pleasantest day since I came. A second walk to Bethlehem. Went at once to Mr. Müller's (the German pastor), lunching there, and going round his schools, and thence to David's Well, afterwards to Urtas, the King's Gardens, and Solomon's Pools, all wonderful sights. At ten there was Bethlehem bread, Bethlehem honey, Bethlehem butter, and Bethlehem pomegranates. This neighbourhood pleases me better than any other."

On the following Friday he boarded an English steamer for Alexandria, which had put in for a few hours at Jaffa, and joined a French boat at Port Said.

At Marseilles, on Monday evening, March 9th, he wrote: "During these days we have had the greatest extremes. Anyone would have pitied the

poor half-drowned crow of one night, and have envied the same individual on Sunday afternoon in good company on the smoothest of seas and the sunniest of days."

He found vent for his gratitude as well as his patriotism on reaching England in these lines:—

1.

"Hail to my native land,
Whose ne'er forgotten strand
Again I see !
None of the broad domains
Where Czar or Emperor reigns,
So well the cause maintains
Of Liberty.

2.

Hail to thy honoured dead,
Who lived and worked and bled
In Freedom's cause !
Whose record still inspires
The sons of patriot sires
With zeal that never tires,
And knows no pause.

3.

Hail to our brethren these,
Who now on land or seas,
Uphold her fame.
And teach the world to-day,
Whatever it may say,
That British hearts for aye,
Are still the same.

4.

And looking up to Thee,
Thou God of liberty,
 Jehovah, Jah !
All hail to Thy great Name,
From Thee our blessings came,
Be thine the loud acclaim,
 Hallelu-jah ! ”

"An active and searching private conscience kept him for ever calling in question both the grounds of his own conduct and the validity of the accepted codes and compromises of society. His sense of social injustice and the inequalities of human opportunity made him inwardly much of a rebel."

COLVIN OF R.L.S.

CHAPTER IV

At Selwood. 1874-1883

HE returned to Sidmouth by way of Frome on the 18th March, 1874. Leaving Bath towards the Frome road, he shouldered his bag and began the trudge up the steep street. At the top of the hill (he says) he saw Wheeler's bus coming, but got to Road before it overtook him. His friends, Mr. and Mrs. L., welcomed him warmly. Walking into Frome the next morning, he called at the old office and found Mr. T. in the Counting-house, and was not a little startled to find that he was then advertising for a "reader." Discovering what the immediate plans and purposes of his visitor were, there were mutual drawings, and practicable suggestions were made.

The whole question was re-discussed at home, and all came to the conclusion that there was at least less probability of doing wrong in accepting the offer of B. & T. than in refusing it. On

the following Monday the arrangement was sealed. Mrs. Lethaby returned from the Western States and soon made things snug in Barton Lane. So the old desk, and the old home, and the old ways, were resumed in Frome and continued for well nigh ten years.

But Palestine was still a dream. The delightful visit, although not immediately fruitful according to the imaginings of six months before, had by no means resulted in the utter dissipation of the glamour hovering over the Holy Land which some less poetic natures have experienced. Sight had not disenchanted William Lethaby. The abstract had become concrete. Enthusiasm was only lying dormant. The Arab still attracted him by his need. But the time was not yet.

So these two cheerfully accepted the position again opened for them. They had not to form new friendships, for the old friends welcomed them back after the two years of wandering, with all the former warmth; and harness was gladly resumed. The full tale of lay preacher's work was again undertaken. In a year or two the village of Norton St. Phillip furnished a special sphere. There was already a commodious Chapel there, but removals and other adverse circumstances had reduced the membership and congregation to a distressing minimum; and there was the serious imminence of retiring altogether.

Mr. L. had been made a Trustee of Norton, and he recognized a personal responsibility. When the question of giving up was discussed, he fought against the suggestion and was met by a challenge which he accepted. He at once started a Sunday School, went round to visit the people, and called on the Vicar, with whom he worked harmoniously. The "cause" revived, and Lethaby became the recognised Methodist pastor.

This new mission involved a long "Sabbath Day's journey," out and in, much above the Hebrew standard, but which our friend did not hesitate to face and persist in until 1883.

Both husband and wife were so thoroughly engrossed in secular and church work that they were obliged—it was a welcome obligation—year by year to give themselves the relief of a three weeks' holiday, which was usually spent in some easily accessible place on the Continent.

In 1871, after the Franco-German War, they went up the Rhine to Coblenz and saw much of the horrible effects of the conflict. They visited the *two miles* of "Kranken" houses, given up to the healing of the wounded and sick soldiers, and saw, among other notables, the old Kaiser at Ems and the giant Prince Albert. The Moravian Institution at Neiuweid on the Rhine was their objective in 1874.

In successive years Normandy and Brittany were their centres. Paris was visited on several

occasions ; twice by the husband alone. In 1879, accompanied by Mrs. Lethaby, he went to the Exhibition. Miss de Breoun's work at Montmartre among the half-mad communist women attracted them. They gave also considerable time to the McCall Mission, and made frequent journeys into the country around in its interests. Lethaby was always accustomed to put his lay-preacher's work to the front, and often shaped his holiday with that in view. He thus became associated with the Rev. Wm. Gibson at Rue Roquepine, and on several occasions preached to the jockeys at Chantilly. It was his habit on these tours to take a supply of French Gospels at the bottom of his portmanteau. Miss Hocart's orphan work, which was at its beginnings in the earlier visits, was another source of absorbing interest. In fact, wherever he went, he sought out some nucleus of religious activity, and made himself familiar with all sorts of good work, both getting and giving inspiration.

Mr. Lethaby held, it may be imagined, very decided political views. His friend, Mr. Lewis, thus deals with this side of his life :—

“ He was never the man about whom doubt as to his views on any subject was possible, and his liberalism was of the sturdiest and most robust type. Moreover, it was undeniably assertive. . . . Perhaps his action in connection with the election of 1876 was as characteristic as any.

“The election came unexpectedly, and it was necessary to get the candidate’s address in print for the morrow. How was it to be done? The last train had gone; the only way was to drive. Mr. Lethaby proposed that somebody be despatched to get the address and return with it in time for issue in the morning. Finally he, Mr. T.H.W., and the writer were deputed to make the journey. When the carriage was ready, it was obvious that the lighter the load the greater the speed, and the first two only went out into the cold and wet November night for the twenty-odd miles journey.

“Arriving at Yeovil, the horses were put up and the remainder of the journey to Barwick was accomplished on foot, where they arrived in the small hours. In the Library, just out of his first sleep (having arrived from London by mail-train that night), the future member for Frome indited his address, which did not suffer, in point of incisiveness, from the friendly criticism of William Lethaby.

“A very useful speaker, with a ready pen, combined with an intimate knowledge of political questions, both historical and current, Mr. Lethaby was an invaluable adjunct to the party, and unquestionably he contributed not a little to the notable victory which followed.

“It goes without saying that such a man was a vehement opponent of slavery in every form, and when in 1875 Lord Derby issued his famous Circular to the captains of war-vessels, which recognised the right of a slave-owner over a fugitive slave, Mr. Lethaby’s righteous indignation knew no bounds. On the platform, and in the London and local press, he spoke, wrote, and demonstrated. He collected petitions, he wrote to Ministers; in short, he was one of the leaders of the agitation which resulted in the withdrawal of the Circular five months later. When a second Circular

was issued, which slightly modified the first, he took part in a renewed agitation, which, after a Commission had reported, resulted in the broad, plain principle being reasserted, that when a slave boards a British vessel, just as when he touches British soil, he is free and cannot be restored to slavery.

“The occasion of Mr. Gladstone’s visit to Longleat in the height of the furious campaign against the Bulgarian atrocities was not likely to be missed by Mr. Lethaby. He sought and obtained an interview with the Grand Old Man in the Library at Longleat, and was largely instrumental in inducing him to speak at the railway station on leaving.”

In 1883 another real breakdown occurred, and longer absence from his work than the usual three weeks was inevitable. He was suffering badly from chronic indigestion, and had become a walking shadow. Both his Circuit ‘Quarterly Meeting’ and Mr. Tanner, his employer, decided that he could not live long, and unhesitatingly said—“Let him go as he lists.”

So again he saw the Star in the East.

He now first came into intimate contact with one who quickly became both counsellor and friend. The Rev. George Piercy had, as a layman, long before gone to China at his own charges; and single-handed got a foothold in that jealously closed land. He confirmed the discovery that the Gospel had charms for the Confucian-bound Chinaman. His devoted work was eventually recognized at home, and became a part of the

enterprise of the W.F.M.S., which has counted scores of honoured workers, and thousands of Chinese converts among its trophies. Mr. Piercy retired from these activities for labours, hardly less abundant, among the Chinese in London. W.L. rejoiced in this work, and, as opportunity offered, aided it. Links of brotherhood were forged as Lethaby's own work opened out towards the nearer East. The initials "G.P." will henceforth be recognized in this record.

Mr. Pritchett, at that time in England, was anxious that his friend L. should go straight and soon to Alexandria, to be at once among Arabs and Arabic, and thence easily reach Gaza, where he expected in September to himself return. He gave notes of introduction to divers friends in Damascus, Beirût, Jerusalem, and Jaffa.

Lethaby was further fortified by the friendship of the Rev. I. E. Page, than whom, no brother could be more brotherly. Tender and warm through all the dark hours, this kinship of soul survives in the treasures of memory opened up in another part of this volume. "I.E.P." stands hereafter for this dear friend.

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May 29, G.P., encouraging the purposes of his friend, writes :—" Unsupported by any Society, you throw yourself on the larger Providence of God. 'By faith,' must be your motto. Faith in a living, ever present, Omnipotent Jehovah. Be sure of *one* man's thorough sympathy with you."

"I think it is John Foster," wrote I.E.P., "who says that, 'Opportunity to the furthest verge of it, is responsibility.' . . . It's all right. . . . Now that the Rubicon is passed, believe steadfastly, and go straight on."

Miss M. Havergal sent a message from Mumbles:—" 'They shall prosper that love Thee.' I am glad you go by the Great St. Bernard. F. sang 'Seulment pour Toi' with the driver on the box of the diligence as we drove up to Orsiere in 1876. . . . She would have so rejoiced in your freedom to go to the Holy Land."

His brother's greeting, 17th June, ran:—"I seem instinctively to say, go in and win. . . . I don't know if your scheme is Quixotic; it certainly isn't modern in its conception. None the worse for that. Our fathers weren't—taking them for all in all—bigger fools than we are. . . . Perhaps you are going to light a candle; at least you are going to play the man. . . . 'The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble, the God of Jacob defend thee.'"

The father was not hopeful of the project:—"I cannot write approvingly or encouragingly. . . . You have, I suppose, counted the cost—a fearful one, it appears to me. . . . Well, well! it's all a riddle to us from beginning to end. . . . I can now only add my hope that your desires may be fulfilled."

Mr. Walter Besant, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, said:—"I am surprised to hear that you are going to take up your stay in Palestine; I

wish you success in your undertaking, which is one of no common danger."

Dr. Faussett, of York, with introductions and a cheque, sent his heartiest wishes for success.

Rev. R. M. Bullen, curate to Archdeacon Farrar, commended him "to God and the Word of His grace" with:—"I trust that the God of the raven and the lily will bless you wherever you are."

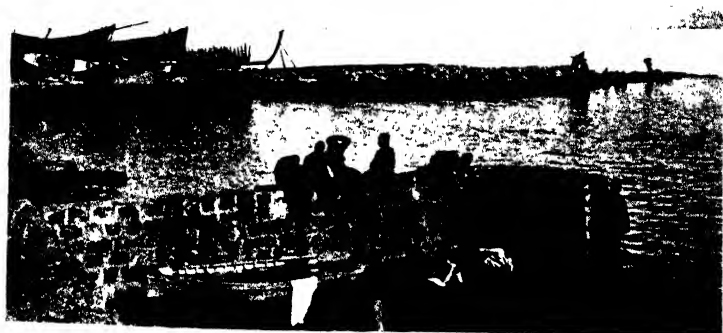
Mr. Lethaby, of course, felt that at the beginning he must not risk his wife's life; and friends approved.

G.P. added, July 7th:—"It shall be my business to ask praying souls to remember you. . . Manna fell in those parts you go to, for many years, and God wrought wondrously for His people. Mrs. L. will make you thrice as acceptable to an Eastern people. . . But she can by and bye join you."





BEIRUT.



BEIRUT.

"Prudent advices, when the prudence is only inspired by sense are generally foolish; and the only reasonable attitude is obstinate hopefulness and brave adherence to duty."

DR. A. MACLAREN.

CHAPTER V

A Second Time Eastward. Beirût.

1883

SO after an interval of nearly ten years Mr. Lethaby started again for the East. He was accompanied as far as Milan by his friend, the Rev. F. H. Smith. Brief words from his own notes will enable us to keep sufficiently abreast of his movements.

"July 13th. We had a foggy crossing from Weymouth to Cherbourg. . . Called on the Rev. D. A. de Mouilpied at the Rue Roquepine in Paris. . . They are in sorrow . . but were most cordial, and our talk was delightful. . .

"We walked the last thirty kilomètres towards Basle in great heat through a forest, amid an abundance of wild cherries. . . Mons. Rapport advises me to go to the Lebanon first—get well into the language, and, maybe, preach after awhile. . . On the road approaching Berne we saw an interesting old open-air pulpit outside a village church.

"At Vevey the sunset beamed on the water and on the snow-peaks in a thoroughly celestial fashion.

“Thursday evening, St. Pierre. Many mercies. Alps all around. We are about four hours from the Hospice. But this is a filthy place, where Napoleon I. breakfasted when he crossed the Alps. . . The visitors' book is a strange study. Have found F. R. H.'s autograph among the rest.

“Hospice du Grand St. Bernard, Friday afternoon, 20th July. As we approached we were welcomed by sheets of rain—solid clouds of it. Soft snow under foot—path doubtful, wind in the face—five miles of it from the last house. . . The dogs are like splendid young lions, and they *can* bark. . . The brothers gave us a room with three beds,—change of slippers, coffee, bread and butter. Visitors include a newly-married French couple, a Scotch pair, with a Catholic priest from Boston, U.S., two French ladies, and two Welsh. . . There is a library of dirty old Latin books, with a sprinkling of George Eliot and Dickens.

“Saturday evening, 21st. We slept well at the Hospice in spite of the night's storm. At 5.30, ding, dong! Prayers in the Church. At 6, Mass. Then breakfast was allowable. . . The weather brightened, and with a mile of descent we left the snow behind. Then came the first Italian village; and down at last to cherries and plums and grapes until Aosta was reached, and the welcome post.

“Milan, Saturday evening, 28th. On the road I had many halts; long stretches of road; miles in sight at once. . . With Sig. Paschetto (Baptist) have had an hour at Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew. He is a great book lover and philologist. . . Before breakfast this morning I went to the top of the Cathedral. It is altogether unequalled in beauty, but it is not *grand*; and the sight of the ceremonial would surely disgust a ritualist.”

At Milan he received a characteristic post-card from his friend Pritchett : " Nearly all avow there is no open door, quoting Rev. iii. 8, instead of Mark xvi. 15. Suppose that Seymour and Wolseley had returned saying there was no ' open door.' "

On the Monday while waiting on the roadside at a cobbler's shop for his boot to be stitched, he wrote :—

" Yesterday at the Cathedral I saw the thousands in and out continually as I sat in the choir in the seat of the Scribes ; and went later to the English Church service. This was enjoyable. At 12.30, Signor Wigley was preaching at the Methodist Italian Church. At the close we both spoke briefly, and he interpreted. F.H.S. has returned to England.

" *Tuesday, 9 a.m.* Since five I have had a beautiful tramp—clouds screening the sun ; chestnut and mulberry trees lining the road. Brooks of water and abundant vegetation ! A charming lake-side walk at Desenzano. While halting at Peschiera, one of the famous quadrilateral towns, I sat on the lake-side steps and managed to slide bodily into the water, but the sun soon dried me. My night resting-place was good for the conjuring up of bandits. The aged landlady gave me some milk as soon as the cows came in, and then charged me for it with my bed and supper, 5½d. ! These houses are like castles, though ; and all my ingenuity could not get me out in the morning till the daughter came down and unbarred the ' impedimenta ' ; so it was five before I started."

Giving two hours to the amphitheatre at Verona, he got into Vicenza before dark after " a salamander day," and stayed at the " Four Pilgrims." The next

halt of the pedestrian was at Padova, where, at the Chiesa Evangelica, he was the guest of Sig. Melis, to whom he had been introduced by his colleague, Sig. Rosa, of Milan. "If my stomach," he says, "stands well the work I am now giving it I shall not be able to find much fault with its digestive powers; but when you get into an Italian house it is difficult to keep control."

On Friday, August 3rd, after a "splendid rdie" into Venice, and having passed "miles of 'viali' and canals, and negotiated a hundred courts, manned by five hundred touters, in sub-portico Cavalotte" he found delightful refuge with the minister of the Free Italian Church. He hears that the cholera was abating in the Levant, and decides to go on *viâ* Smyrna. Then on Thursday noon, August 9th, he writes:—

"*On board the 'Leda.'* A greater contrast cannot be than between last week and this. . . I am more of a gentleman than I have ever been. . . Arabic and Syriac save me. I am the only passenger on board. How glad I shall be of a temporary resting-place where I can get the language from living voices. If there were something that *you* also could come to for a time it would be cause for double gratitude. I have never been more conscious of the working of Providence and Grace than since the 9th July. If we are faithful—'faithful is He who hath called us, who also will do it.'"

Smyrna was reached August 16th, and two days later he wrote:—

"I have seen much of Mr. Eppstein's work among the Jews, and am greatly pleased. . . In one house we

visited, fancy me served with preserved apricots by a bejewelled young Jewess. . . There were about a score of the household and visitors; and we had wholesome theological talks and discussions. Then the shortened English liturgy translated into Judæan-Spanish, prefaced a vigorous sermon on Isaiah xl. . . Accompanying Mr. E. to the British Hospital I read and prayed with three Protestants.

"August 21st. Have been on board the *Lazaroff* Russian boat for the last sixteen or seventeen hours. She was authorised to stop at Beirût. The four days at Smyrna were like Paradise compared with what preceded and what has followed. The unspeakables on this boat—not all human—are so numerous that I shall be glad indeed when the 'Promised Land' is reached."

At Alexandretta on Friday he was first informed that cholera was in every town in Syria, and then that both cholera and quarantine were at an end. Neither statement affected his fear or appetite. So he reached Beirût on the 28th, and records:—

"Yesterday was the weariest I have had for a long time, although without bodily pain. . . Former knowledge of the place is serviceable. . . Everybody seems away in the mountains. I have spoken to several to-day who feel as Mr. Pritchett does about certain aspects of current mission work. But I do not want to seem to set up as a reformer of other people's reformations."

He was recommended to go for a time to Brumana, towards Lebanon, whence he wrote Wednesday, Aug. 29th.

"This has been a short chapter, but a difficult one. After we had gone about a couple of miles, I ahead, my

friend shouted, got into a carriage, and would pay for a donkey for me to ride. For a mile or two I felt quite a lord mayor. Then the darkness came on, but the brute picked his Z-like way upwards. Then the Arab tied the ass up in the dark, and I followed him up stone steps, along a passage to a door. . . A bed was arranged for me at the Girls' Training School, to which I was led by a 'Day and Martin' complected damsel who carried a lantern. Here I am writing. After breakfast this morning Dr. Beshara read a Psalm in Arabic, which I was able to follow; then came a lengthened silence and a brief prayer.

"*Sept. 9th.* I am hardly radiantly happy. In my new cave-lodgings are some twenty spiders and two hundred webs, and day and night I am bombarded by mosquitoes and insects generally. My tea is flavoured with anything that may happen to have been in the same pot previously. . . By night I dream incessantly of insect powder and camels and conjugations. By day I find that the American-Arabic lesson-book is full of mistakes, and my teacher, Muallim Risk, is not of much value to me. I am advised that after a little while it will be well for me to go down to Beirût both for language and temporary employment. Everybody says once learn the language and all will go well."

The melting of the means, and the uncertainties of the future, both for himself and his wife, haunt the letters in which he also says: "Everywhere one turns the eye outside this village there is beauty. The view last night at sunset was superb. My clothes and boots and stockings! alas! alas! I want to know what is coming, and when."

Consolation came to the wife from Mr.

Pritchett on the 27th September. "Having spent various periods, not less than four years altogether, in one half-furnished room and another, in various parts of Syria, doing all my own cooking, sweeping, cleaning, and so on, and spending a very few shillings per week, I feel no pity for Mr. Lethaby as to that. But for you it would be a very different matter, and you would probably break down. . . People in the East are very good to strangers, and I do not think you need be uneasy about Mr. L."

But he himself says on October 3rd :—

"I have survived a month in this house, but it has been no easy matter. . . Picture me, squat as usual, a clay 'tabag' (indescribable) in front of me, with a few bits of charcoal kindling, and I blowing them. Upon these a new earthen pot of my own, covered with a basin, also my own, by way of lid. At last the water boils. The basin now serves for a tea-pot, warmed ready; also for cup and saucer, as you may suppose. Afterwards I thought I would try cooking rice, and had something more like a meal than since I had one at T.W.'s supper-table the other Sunday.

"There is a strange scene as I write, just in front of my den. A few feet down the slope are two camels that, having cursed and been cursed, have laid down, whilst the men are stripping all the trees about, that have not already been stripped of leaves. These they stuff into bags, and then, sitting down by the sheep, tied up to the house, cram the leaves down its throat, and so attempt to fatten it day after day. Then one of these days it will be killed and half-cooked, and will be kept as long as it may last the family for 'kibby,' 'belangeer,' etc.

"But below the scene is wonderful. Down 200 or 300 feet there is the slight shimmer of the little pool where I make my morning ablutions. Then two or three villages down, down below; then big descents, with the shore and the sea miles away—very still, yet the line of water curling always quite plainly. Beirût is then some miles to the left, and Nahret Kelb quite as far to the right. . . This evening the Arabic meeting brings one of the two diversions to the monotony of the week."

Then followed days of misery and suffering under most inhospitable circumstances; but on October 15th he says:—

"I am the more convinced of the principles on which I set out, and of my ability, in God's strength, to carry them to a successful issue. This does not make me less desirous, however, of having as few hindrances as possible.

"On Sunday, Mr. Reed, of the B. and F.B.S., was at the American Church. He came over and spoke to me, and we walked back together. . . The evening service was unique in many ways, Arabic and English words being sung together—Arabic alternating. . . There were four American D.D.'s, one Arab, two Germans. Mr. Bevan Braithwaite addressed the students at four. The Brumana notables of both sexes were there. . . B.B. was fine indeed—straightened himself—spoke up well and forcefully."

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Lethaby's soul is revealed in a paragraph of this date to the *King's Highway*, which he heads:

"A MISSIONARY PROBLEM.

"I am in a mission field. . . Considering that Pentecost *has* come—may I make sure, if the Word is

read, and if the message is delivered, although with faltering lips—that the Holy Spirit shall witness with signs following? Or, should I think only that *perhaps* it will be so when twenty or forty or a hundred years of preaching have done their work, and ‘all who now in bodies live’ have passed to their account unconverted, because the Spirit of Conviction has not been poured out. . . . As the Spirit *has* come, will His baptism, assuredly, in a heathen or non-heathen land certainly lead to the conviction and conversion of those to whom the word of reconciliation is preached? . . . When you have given your answer, may He give the proof that it is a right one.”

Nov. 7th. He counsels his wife, to whom he had sent books, as to her preparatory study of Arabic:—

“The blue book is the Arabic primer. . . . You see one letter is piled on the top of another; a table on an armchair; a bedstead on the top of that, with a chest of drawers above. That is a fair symbol of what you may look for. But you will dig them out. Reserve pronunciation until you get here. . . . I am very glad to see you write of believing *now* in God’s will concerning us both. . . . I am helped much to find whom you have seen, and who are praying for us. . . . It is not always where one expects that the dew falls the heaviest. . . .

“I am very glad of all the way now it is over. I should not have known as much as I do of Arabic, probably, nor seen so much of Syrian life. . . . I have learned what acute bodily pain means, and I have seen through much missionary work. But there has been more *enjoyment* in being weak and getting better since last Thursday than there was in the health and comparative strength of the previous two months. Once I

found my face muscling into a smile, and it was quite a novel sensation. In fact, I cannot remember having laughed since F.H.S. and I parted at Milan, and I doubt whether I shall again until you come."

He had had many days of sore straits and perils through defective sanitation and vile food at Brumana, and had suffered much. Then, in attempting the journey to Beirût in his awfully weakened state, down "tracks over shingle and stones, from the size of a marble to a big boulder," and this through terrific rains with thunder and lightning, no wonder he says, "thank God I am here!" He speaks gratefully of doctor and nurses—Kaiserswerth deaconesses. And when convalescence set in, and his first dinner was before him, he naïvely remarks, "I shall not soon forget that meal."

There followed a comforting batch of letters and an abundant supply of books. So matters mended. His friend, Mr. Bullen, through Mrs. Spurgeon's "Book Fund," had sent him a greatly-prized Arabic Lexicon and Grammar. He waited as patiently as his restless spirit permitted, preaching occasionally for Mr. Mackay in Beirût, until Mr. Pritchett should arrive.



GENERAL VIEW, NABLOUS (SHECHEM, SYCHAR).

**"Here I am a sojourner and a stranger,
Worn with hardship and exposed to danger,
Like a pilgrim with my staff in hand;
With the cross upon my breast I wander
To the promised Canaan which lies yonder."**

— C. J. SPITTA.

CHAPTER VI

Beirût to Jerusalem. 1883

THE late Rev. Geo. Bowden, of Bristol, tells an incident in the Winter Number of the *Methodist Recorder* for 1894, which lights up this marked providentially-led life :—

"I was attending a Convention at Stroud. After the morning service we were at dinner, and in the midst of free conversation, the friend at my right elbow said suddenly in an undertone, 'Do you know Mr. Lethaby?' I replied 'No'; and he proceeded to pour into my ear the story of Mr. Lethaby's purpose to Mission Syria, trusting in God for his daily bread and guidance. This interesting story had nothing to do with the general trend of conversation, and seemed altogether inopportune. I little judged how special was the interruption, and that it would prove a link in a chain of events by which God was caring for His servant.

"At home, the next morning, the second or third letter which I opened was from the eminent 'Friend' in Birmingham, Mr. Joseph Sturge. . . He had written enquiring about a certain Mr. Lethaby, who had presented himself at the Beirût station of the Bible

Society. Did I know him? . . . I was able, upon the enclosed telegraphic reply, to warrant the wandering Englishman, who was at Beirût, as a brave and true man. . . . But for the abruptly-told story of the day before I could not have done this. . . . He who sent forth the first disciples 'without purse or scrip' knew all.

"Seven or eight years afterwards Mr. Lethaby came into Kingswood School for an hour one Sabbath evening. I said, 'Mr. Lethaby, I have an interesting association with you and your work, and I should like to know the sequel. I told him the story, and added, 'Now what came of it?' He said, 'I never heard of this before, but it is extraordinary. I had been very ill in the hospital at Beirût, and was leaving it without means, uncertain as to my course. During my stay in the hospital, I had seen and conversed with Mr. Barnes, of Damascus. On leaving, the clergyman who directs the Church Missions in that part of Syria said to me: "You are not strong enough for work. I am much behind with my correspondence. You had better stay a few days, and help me, and you will then be more fit for duty." I remained with him for about ten days.

"On the morning when I left him, uncertain whither I should go, two letters were put into his hand as I stood at his door. "Oh!" he said, "one of these refers to you." It was from Mr. Barnes, enquiring if I was willing to undertake for several months the work of distributing copies of the Scripture among the pilgrims at Jerusalem. It was the work above all other which I wished to do. At once I accepted the proposal. The result of your telegram was that for eighteen months at Jerusalem, Port Said, and elsewhere, I was employed by the Bible Society in the very work which I desired.'"

Mr. Pritchett arrived November 29th, and was met by his friend on landing. Accompanying him to his old hotel he enjoyed "the finest sleep" he had had in Syria. Mr. P. was able to give him points in economy, too, explaining that his house-bill at Gaza was not more than five shillings a week, and that with plenty.

The boat was three days late in leaving Beirût, and did not weigh anchor till seven on Saturday evening. It was a lovely night, but the "ship's company" was of the usual polyglot character. It was strange indeed to sit, stand, or lie down on deck in such motley society. At two in the morning the Bay of Acre was entered; at three the perils of landing in a small boat were survived, and at 4.30 he says :—

"At least one petition was already answered, for I had a basin of bread and milk brought to me in the home of the young German Missionary to whom I had been led at Haifa.

"This colony is one of those strange outcomes of German and German-American thought. They were going to build the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, and call themselves 'Templars.' But they have drifted into heterodoxy. The Missionary with whom I am staying is the Chaplain of the orthodox. I went to his little forenoon German service, and to the afternoon Arabic Church of England service. Acre, on the other side of the bay, is full of Muhammadan influences.

"This afternoon Mr. Horn and I had a fine walk up to the top of Carmel. What a sight! The 'great and wide sea' on one side, and on the opposite side the Bay of Acre, with the white cliff and point beyond it,

marking the corner of the coast, behind which lie Tyre, Sidon and Beirût. Then inland the hills of Galilee heading the valley of Jezreel, with the hills of Nazareth at the back. Up to the north, Hermon lifts his snowy head, only at present showing himself in the clear light of the morning.

“We were shown in and around the Convent by a real Carmelite,—Father Augustine of St. Therese, who delights in Milton and Homer. On parting he promised to pray for us and asked for our prayers. The Convent has a real history, and while Protestants are doing so comparatively little, they cannot say much against those who have at least, in the long run, stood their ground, and have now many more missionaries than all the rest put together.

“The top of Carmel is of very large extent, with a wild growth of herbs and bushes and flowers; thousands of white crocuses are now very charming. Elijah could have had little difficulty in building the altar of stone anywhere thereabouts,—a rather soft limestone cropping up or lying about everywhere.”

Private finances were at this moment complicated by unexpected losses. Both wife and husband had a specially anxious time, and distance prevented conference. But both continued unassailable in the belief that they were moving under the Highest guidance.

From St. Cuthbert's Rectory, York, Canon Fausset wrote: December 10th. “‘As the sufferings of Christ abound in you, so your consolation also aboundeth by Christ.’ Your faith is a good lesson to me. I doubt not your way will be opened to be ‘a vessel unto honour, meet for

the Master's use.' Your motto seems to be, 'Ready for either'—the altar or the plough. Well, I remember you daily in prayer. You are not much worse off as to externals than Thompson in Formosa. Pray for *me* too, for I have a hard parish to labour in, poor and ignorant. . . What think you of the Mahdi, and what do Muhammadans about you think of him?"

To the Sitt, from Haifa, the traveller wrote:—

"I have called on Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Oliphant. . . He quite approves of my idea, and says, as I do, that *living among* the people is what is needed. . . Hermon has more snow and looks grand; 'the air is health giving.

"*Wednesday, 7th.* I left Haifa at one yesterday, and went along the sands until past where the Kishon comes out. Mr. H. came with me for about an hour. Then I went across the flat into an olive grove, and through rocky byways for about an hour, when I found a place of rest for the night at Sheph'amar. Not an European or English-speaking person there. The native clergyman of the C.M.S. was kindness itself. After mutual English and Arabic blunderings I slept on the divan. Up as soon as light, after bread and tea my friend came with me half a mile or so, when I was again alone in the world, really amongst the hills of Galilee! It was only a track, but I saw before me on the hill, what I took to be Nazareth. It proved to be Seffna-rizeh, the old Sephoris. By the kind assistance of a woman I found my way up to the Orphanage at Nazareth, where I had a pretext for calling—a message from Beirût—wet as I was with a heavy rain on the way. . . Miss Dickson has been most hospitable. She has been working here for 32 years."

"I want you to get Palmer's Grammar of Persian, Hindustani, and Arabic. If you get that and *read* it, you will understand Arabic by the time you get here."

From the Convent of the Carmelites at Safed (Tiberias) he says:—

"*Friday evening, 15th.* Here is an old monk who has been wondrously kind. . . . When leaving Nazareth, I called at Dr. V.'s and borrowed a sheet of the Palestine map, which I have shown to my monk, and have indited a letter in Latin for him, asking Mr. Besant for a copy of the map, as the Convent has helped pilgrims and travellers for many years.

"To-day has been a red-letter day. Miss D. would insist upon a man coming all the way with me. We started at nine, passing through Cana of Galilee, by a plain, across the crest of a hill; and then came the wonderful lake view. It is indeed the delight of a lifetime, and I cannot attempt to describe it. Tiberias is, however, such a ruined mass of hovels, that you may well be thankful that everybody says it will be all but impossible for us to live here. In fact, I shall be better pleased with every place else for having seen it.

"*Wednesday, 19th, Nablous.* What have I gone through these last four days! The night at Tiberias was a stormy one. You can estimate the temperature. Middle of winter; windows wide open; a sheet and counterpane only! In the morning the old priest had a waterfowl shot and cooked for me to bring away for lunch. After a good breakfast, started at eight, having been taken to the roof and shown everything. We went on, and on, until we got back to the Orphanage about three. On Sunday, Arabic worship at C.M.S. church, 9.30. At three I held English service in the Orphanage school-room.



VIEW OF TIBERIAS, SEA OF GALILEE.

“After prayers on Monday, soon after starting I fell in with two donkey men, and my way was clear to Jenin (Engannim), right across the plain of Esdraelon, passing the hovels of Jezreel. Here my trouble commenced. The population is entirely Muhammadan, except two men who live in separate places, and with both of whom I conversed. One was a blacksmith who knew a little Italian, which I had to use. The other was an Effendi in Turkish employ. I could sleep with him in the room which is his office. A Turk, who shared our room, so snored and spit and behaved, that in the middle of the night I could stay no longer. So, getting up, I went out, braved the dogs and the jackals, and by moonlight found the way towards Nablous, which, of course, I had reconnoitred the day before. Then I chatted with Moslem boys, and gave a text card to all who could read it. I had an attentive listener to as much of the goth Psalm as the boys and I could read.

“Well, up and down gorges and through olive-groves, the moonlight led me to a village which ought to be called *Dog* village. I had to be sentry until daylight opened. Then, as I passed through the hovels, there were three animals to be kept away at one time, as they stood on the dirt roofs just level with my head. Mr. A.'s stick was of real use then. On and on; plain and mountain; gorge and wood; until just at dusk last night, I hobbled in by the old Roman road to Nablous, and was led to Mr. Falsheers, a kind German clergyman of the C.M.S., to whom I had letters. . . I am gratefully resting here for the day. The number of places is far beyond what I had thought, and Moslem almost entirely. I must have gone far out of my way, they say, to Sebaste (Samaria) old and new.

“*Friday, 21st.*—I have been to see Ebal and Gerizim. The mountains themselves are like the two blades of a

pair of scissors, between which Nablous lies. At the end of Ebal, the northern one, you approach Jacob's Well. I went across the rubbish, and 'sat thus on the well.'

"I started with Mr. F.'s horse and servant at early morning. The latter was a deceiver. When I believed we were at Bethel, we were three hours distant, and the worst three hours of all. At last, however, I got there, and enjoyed such a sight as did Abraham and his son and grandson (Gen. xiii. 3-10).

"At Ramallah I met with Dr. and Mrs. H., and had generous hospitality.

"The next morning, in a delightful breeze, I trudged towards El Khuds (Jerusalem), and after about two and a half hours, came to a spot, which I anticipate your seeing, too, some day. Such a view of the city! especially of the localities of the Crucifixion and Ascension—*with no one at all about!*

"By noon I was among the houses, and after some ups and downs left my case at the Bible dépôt, and found, at the Jews' Girls' School, the Rev. A. H. Kelk, who is cordially friendly. He wrote to the head of the Prussian Hospice, where I am writing, and where I sleep to-night, at any rate.

"As I read your letter *here*, myself as hearty as possible, it seems as if I must have been crying 'wolf.' I hardly need sympathy, after doing what nobody said could be done. I shall not be likely to attempt a more arduous task, with my slender stock of Arabic, than walking through this land alone. But I have not had any molestation.

"There are four possible fields for us:—(1) Safed and Galilee; (2) Hebron and the south; (3) the country between Jaffa and Haifa, coast and inland; and (4) Gaza or Mejdal and the neighbourhood."

It, however, turned out eventually to be neither of these.

Fortunately, the financial strain was removed by an almost un hoped-for return of a loan of some years before.

It was now time to "take stock," and he does so in the "*Appeal*" which was issued by his friends in England under the title "A Mission to Palestine." After a rehearsal of what was at that moment being attempted in various parts of Palestine by divers workers with divers names, he continues:—

"On Christmas morning every place in England resounded with the name of Bethlehem. In Bethlehem itself what was to be seen? The one great help of the Christian name is a large new church, a brass band, new organ, the patriarch, incense, flowers, flattery, processions, genuflexions to the man and to the *image* of the Child! Protestantism was represented solely by two single women living in one story of a house, and there carrying on a school of less than a dozen scholars; *meaning* to build when they can get the money. This is all that Bethlehem has to show for any English love of its Babe. French love of the Virgin has in one building more education of boys and girls than is to be found in all our schools in Palestine put together. And this only refers to one of the (so called) apostolic churches.

"The question may be asked whether Laodicea has any right to call other churches names.

"My Tuesday's walk from Engannim to Nablous was most instructive, too. You could not but be astonished at the number of villages on nearly every hill-top of Samaria;

and these are almost entirely Moslem, with not the slightest effort made on their behalf. Then what is to be said of Nablous, with more than 20,000 people—Moslem in the great majority—one man holding up the standard of Christianity, he a German. Is there no woman of our thirty or forty millions, or of the American people, who is prompted to go and live among the women of Samaria for the Saviour's sake ? ”





JAFFA FROM THE SEA.

"When the evening sun intensifies the colour and size of the Moab Mountains, the latter appear to heave up towards the City of Jerusalem, and to present to her the threshold of the Arabian desert immediately above the hills of her own wilderness. . . This is the spell which strikes even the Western traveller as he passes a few evenings on the housetops of Jerusalem."

DR. G. ADAM SMITH.

CHAPTER VII

Jerusalem and Alexandria. 1884-5

THE earlier months of the year were diligently used in the quiet work which came to hand.

It was hardly possible to plan. It was a time of enquiry and study both of the language and the people. Lethaby's eyes and ears were always open, his heart responsive, his ready hand held out.

Through the good offices of friends he had made in Beirût, he was installed to the special work which the Bible Society undertakes annually in Jerusalem. The Babel-tongued visitors, year by year, become receivers and scatterers of the Good Seed.

The "pilgrim weeks" were therefore full of activities in and around the Holy City. It was ever a congenial task to which his amenity of manner and his polyglot vocabulary lent themselves so well.

In April he was two-thirds of the way through his undertaking, but had no clear light as to what would come next. He continued to make unceasing study of the city and its endless and infinitely varied points of interest, as opportunity offered.

"These have been," he says, "exciting and interesting days. The Muhammadans are always pleased to look at my Arabic Gospels. So I gave my unpaid Moslem assistant, at the gate, Matthew, open at xi. 28-30. He read and went on through the 12th chapter, asking his companion 'Who is this Son of Man?'—a question which I was able to answer, much to his gratification: '*Saidna Isa*,' 'Our Lord Jesus.' He then went back to xi. 28, and you should have heard his spontaneous '*taïb, ketheer taïb*'—'good, very good.' And all the while he helped with ready Arabic to my applicants. Surely these are not far from the Kingdom.

"Yesterday beggars description. After the English church service, nearly all turned out to see the departure of the Muhammadan pilgrims for Neby Musa, which is conveniently called the grave of Moses, in order to avoid the discomfort of going three times the distance to Nebo. I, however, took a delightful stroll to the real Golgotha; read the Gospels, and went on by myself to Scopus and to the top of Olivet, resting where I could sing, 'Thou Shepherd of Israel and mine.' I was far from any other voice."

More and more distinctly it was borne in upon Mr. Lethaby that his work would eventually be on the other side of Jordan. But he had to wait, and watch and pray for the moment of advance.

While thus biding his time, the Rev. R. H.

Weakley, of Alexandria, the much esteemed Bible Society's representative for Egypt, Arabia and Syria, had offered Lethaby a temporary engagement at Port Said and Alexandria.

It was in the early days of this sojourn, in July, 1884, that an event of considerable personal concern occurred.

Mr. Lethaby with some frequency availed himself of the opportunity of bathing in the shallow sea beyond the breakwater at Port Said. Late one afternoon, soon after entering the water he simultaneously noticed the water crimson-tinged, and felt a strange stinging in his right leg. He immediately saw himself facing an enormous shark, lying on his back, ready for a fatal grab. In 'less than a millionth part of a second' (as he said) he threw himself out of the water; but it was to find four ribbons of flesh hanging from the leg, which was bleeding profusely. He managed to thrust his "good" leg into his trousers, and dragged himself along at the back of the native houses to the French Hotel. Here he urgently enquired for Army Surgeon Prout, a man of warm heart and great pluck and resource, who was staying in the hotel. He gave immediate attention to the badly bitten man, and with Dr. Robertson sewed up the torn flesh. Mr. Prout, with brotherly and professional care, sat up all night with his patient, and continued his kindly attention until he was convalescent.

Mrs. Lethaby, without knowledge of what had happened, was on her way to her husband in Egypt by the s.s. *Rome* from Tilbury, and reached Port Said two days after the incident. Lethaby insisted, contrary to medical orders, on leaving his bed to meet her on board. It was perhaps a pardonable wilfulness—they had not met for a year. But she was, of course, greatly shocked to see him dreadfully emaciated and with all the marks of a serious invalid. He could not explain until they got to their home. Then she found that he had risked his life rather than she should find him, without warning, on the sick bed. The fact is, he had heroism for anything which the moment seemed to demand.

Although he did not rise from his couch for six weeks, the life was spared for further service; but the deep marks of the shark's teeth remained to the end of life.

This call to Egypt came in the early days of the English occupation. Khartoum was looming large on the horizon.

His intimate friends in England were watching the movements of this voluntary missionary with much interest; and they readily anticipated possible difficulties of finance. So he writes from Alexandria :—

“Do not be in the slightest trouble about me. . . . Say all you can about the *work* and for other labourers;

and abundance of prayer, please, for guidance and for power. But for the present, and for a twelvemonth I want no more. Mr. Hill's kind donation was just a 'go forward,' and now, please God, I go. Fifty pounds yet remain of the sum paid from Philadelphia, and whilst I am working for the Bible Society of course all wants are provided for.

"I had last week nineteen cases of Scriptures to get unpacked and see to, and there is a mass of enquiry and information on subjects which just suit me, with three colporteurs to arrange for. Though my eyes are on Moab and my heart is there, yet you will, I think, see with me that with such a *present* call and such weakness as of course my leg still feels, it would not be wise for me at once to leave this, which is so manifestly and really God's work. Mr. Weakley offers me the pilgrim work again, and from that I hope to take my experimental trip, which needs to be looked at step by step. . . If it be the will of Providence, and we are faithful to His guidance, I imagine sometimes how Methodism and the Church of England may in Palestine be what they might have been in England last century; and how Moab, Edom, and Arabia may be more distinctively our own. . . Mrs. L. is at present helping in Port Said; if I stay here much longer she will, of course, come on to me.

"The state of things here is wonderful. Alexandria is as Ireland in respect of English troops and barracks. In the centre of the Halle des Consules, the Tribune is crowded with red coats who keep guard all round. To see the bugler come out and break the stillness of the nine o'clock or ten o'clock hour with his British blast is monitory. Then only about a quarter of a mile behind is 'Caracols,' one of the four barracks and military centres; and at the other end of the 'Place des Consules' is the Khedive's Palace, Ras el Tin, really another

British barrack. There, I believe, the greatest number of troops are housed. Then the forts all round the town are manned by English soldiers, who are, of course, entirely foreigners.

“The English language is for me, terribly little understood, and I have to put together what I can of French, Italian and Arabic. With both soldiers and sailors I have work in odd corners and at odd hours. Sometimes I find my way into a police station with a batch who have got into grief, and then stick by them to see fair play. Some terribly touching words I have heard under these circumstances.”

A new and closely attached friend now came into the Moab league of mercy. On the 26th October, Mr. James Barlow, of Bolton, wrote to I.E.P.:—“I have had a thought on my mind for some time, and especially during my waking moments last night, which I cannot think is from the Evil One. . . I have read with deep interest the letters from W.L., who went to Palestine on his own initiation, and of your suggestion that the Lay Preachers should adopt it as their mission.”

Mr. Barlow recommended that a special “Appeal” should be prepared, of which he would pay the cost, and that gifts should take the form of an “Easter Offering for the Saviour’s Country.”

To this, W.L. replied, 7th November:—

“I should feel much more embarrassed did I not know that you are all doing it ‘*for His sake*,’ and to answer your own prayer, ‘*Thy Kingdom Come*.’ . . Will it not be better to wait till I have been across the Jordan

before accepting Mr. B.'s very kind offer? . . . If I get permission to live at Kerak I shall look upon the enterprise as providentially authenticated. Do you not think the putting forth of this appeal had better be postponed until I can write from Moab and say, 'By the grace of God I am here!' . . . What I crave above all is guidance and grace, and the stirring up of our people to give *themselves* to work. . . . Then I am ready to feel that whether in Pisgah or Mount Zion Cemetery my body may be, with my charge, laid down."

"I am told by Mr. Weakley and others that the consciousness of sin is a very faint thing with the Moslem, and so it is with too many elsewhere; but I was much struck in reading Sir W. Muir's large life of Mahomet, to find some of M.'s last words were 'Lord, grant me pardon! pardon!' It seems to me that is something to appeal to with Moslems; if M. needed pardon, his followers surely must. . . .

"Since writing the last sentence I have had to lead, for the fourth time, our colporteurs in an hour's reading, meditation and prayer. This is a most responsible hour. . . . I have chosen the seven epistles to the churches, which seem excellent for the purpose.

"24th. Only let me feel we are in the right, and Moab and Arabia shall, by God's help, have one trumpeter at least. . . . I confess to much pain at some points of the prospect. . . . But Palgrave's Arabia opens up a wonderful field of work.

"To my thinking the air and climate of Palestine generally is far preferable to that of Egypt, and I fully sympathise with the jubilant anticipations of Moses and the sensible ones among his people."

Acceptable counsel again came from his old Beirût friend, 8th January, 1885. "It is nearly

eleven years since I was in Kerak, and many things may be changed. You will be pretty well received probably, but do not go there alone or on foot. Of the 3,500 Moslems few can read. The 1500 Christians have had a good school for some years. Avoid all controversy. Give my books to the Moslems and New Testaments to the Christians. A stay of ten days at first will be enough, unless you have means to open good schools for Moslem boys, and for Christian and Moslem girls. Go further east, if you can, with one companion, selling books, pins, needles and medicines for a living as an Englishman. I hope you will receive at Jaffa ninety of my books to take with you across the Jordan for the many thousands of Moslems in Salt, the Camps and Moab."

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An opportuntiy, not to be neglected, offered for the Sitt* to visit Cairo; and out of it came an interesting interchange of letters, in which are references to the current events leading up to the tragedy at Khartoum.

"22nd January. News has come of the desperate encounter with 10,000 of the Mahdi's troops near the wells of Shendy. . . It is thrilling to be so near the centre of all this. Army carts laden with tents and bedding and stores are continually passing.

"Old Cairo is beautiful,—Roman aqueducts, ruins, mosques, palaces. From the top of the grotto there is a splendid view of the Pyramids.

* Henceforward "the Sitt" and "Mrs. Lethaby" are interchangeable.

"24th. I have seen many real friends, and have done something, I hope, for Moab: Dr. Grant, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Sandworth, Dean Butcher and others.

"From the Dean's I went to Mrs. Sheldon Amos', where I was ushered into the drawing-room by a bright girl of twelve—with a bonny English face, and quite a likeness to Professor Amos. Presently a tall lady entered and greeted me warmly. 'I am so very glad you have come.' Could she help me? She would have given me a welcome to the New Home for *Slaves*—(no irony)—but the distance is too great. . . We had a talk for three quarters of an hour, then she sent out to hire a carriage, her daughter Bonté to go with us.

"We had a beautiful drive. First call at B. and F. B. Society Dépôt; then to Dr. Klein's private house. He is so glad you are going to Moab, and gave all sorts of advice with intense interest; insisting strongly on the necessity of papers from the authorities of Jerusalem. He lent me Tristram's Moab, which I may take with me and read at Jaffa. Thence to the beautiful Home for Slave women. Only two slaves had been to Mrs. Amos in the morning; one of them sat down at the piano and played and sang very creditably. She was bought a few years ago for four hundred pounds sterling. When they leave their homes or the Harems, Mrs. A. finds them work and protection with all womanly care.

"Mrs. Amos took an opportunity at the Cotton Exhibition of introducing me and our Moab purpose to Lady and Sir Evelyn Baring. 'No harm to be known, you know,' said Mrs. A. 'It is well for such people to remember a name and work like that.'

"Sunday was an interesting but fatiguing day. At a quarter past eight I went to the great Coptic Church, and saw and heard what will always interest me now. At half-past nine to the Arab service in the American

rooms. . . I was much helped by the text, 'Ye have not passed this way heretofore.'"

W.L. wrote 24th January: "The Sussex Regiment has just landed, gone through the city and are coming to Cairo. Can you find out whether Testaments are given to them; if not, I will forward some if you can get them distributed. . . There is much feeling here about the last fight. . . I wish you could give me information about the *Canadians* who are supposed to go back soon. What is the best way for me to get at them?"

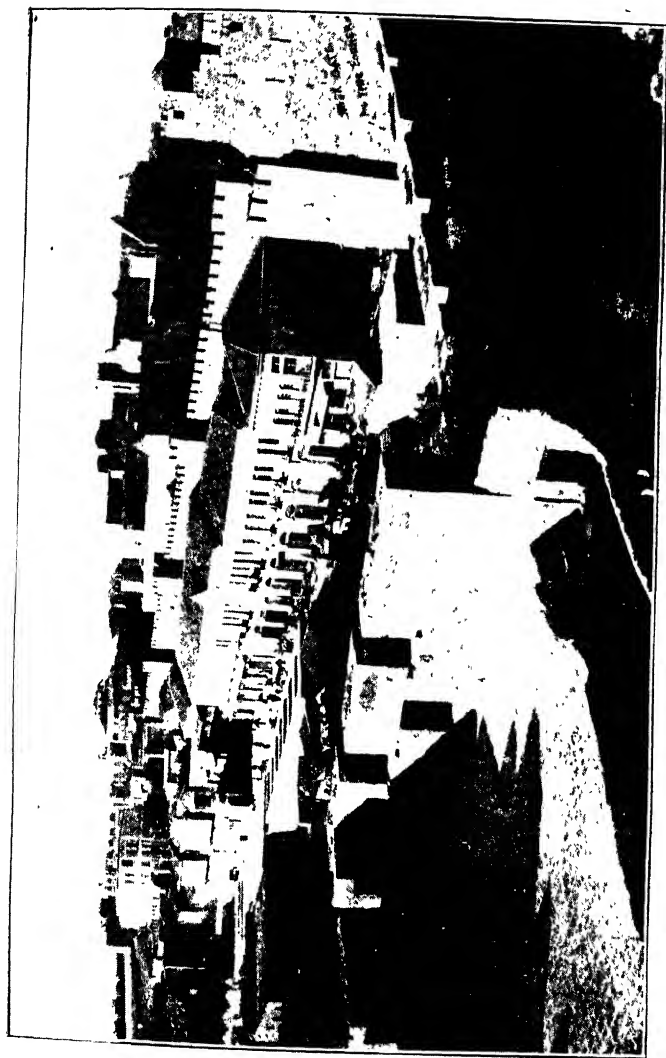
"27th. I was between the Sheikhs of Kerak, and the salvoes of Cairo all night. . . I hope to be able to get away in a fortnight's time. Go on to Jaffa as soon as you conveniently can.

"28th. 'Klinger'—a former worker of the B. and F. B. Society—poor fellow, is in low water. He is going to Jaffa, and hopes to enter Miss Maugan's* hospital there. If you can do aught for this sick Jew in Judæa, who has come to Christ, and before long will be with Christ, do. . I have sent a parcel which belongs to Kerak—the three volumes of Arabic Bible, R. C. Version; twenty-five copies of Arabic Deuteronomy, and a Par. Eng. Bible for ourselves.

"*The Sitt*, 29th. From the top of the great pyramid I begin a letter to you; . now, at home, I continue, and ink over what I pencilled amid the sublime surroundings which almost prevent the expression of thought. It is really all too interesting.

"I have seen Reuter's telegram with the sad news from the front. It makes one's heart ache. General Gordon is supposed to be a prisoner or may be killed. Khartoum taken by treachery."

* An Irish lady who died in Jaffa, worn out trying to get the firman for further work.



VIEW OF JAFFA, INCLUDING BIBLE DEPOT.

On the 30th Lethaby tells I.E.P. that: "As soon as Mr. C., the new Depositary, arrives, I know no reason why my chariot wheels, or paddles, rather, should longer delay. And I hope before the end of April to leave Jerusalem for Kerak." But the terrors of Kerak continued to be painted in lurid colours to the Sitt. She says, in the 3rd February:—

"Mr. Ebsworth's servant, Sheiyn, tells us he went ten months ago to Kerak with some English gentlemen, who were offered the alternative of jumping from the high rock or being javelined. One was killed, the others injured, and Sheiyn himself managed to hide away for three days, after being shot in the back, of which he has now the proofs. He said to Miss Hills: 'If any man tell me go Kerak, my hair stand upright and go white with fear. Nablous not very good—Turkish rule. Es Salt—much better. Madame rest there. No go on to Kerak. Monsieur go if he like—but not alone—oh, no!'

"To which W.L. replied: 'As to Moab, "Let not your heart be troubled." 'Don't forget it is not what people have told either you or me that has been our principal index so far, least of all what natives may say. I walked the whole country north, south, and right through Nablous twice, so I know how to estimate fears.'"

At the beginning of February, 1885, the Sitt got away to Jaffa, and thence wrote:—

"My window overlooks the Russian Count's garden—surely the pleasantest spot in Jaffa—the garden, the pink and blue-robed women, the various-coloured men, the charming babies, the white doves in the trees, and the

blue sea beyond! The people, too, are nice, and so homely to be with.

"I am much distressed at the latest telegrams, and, worst of all, the probable fate of General Gordon! Miss Picard,* of Gaza, was in the boat with me. She came from Cairo, having just buried her father, who was on General Wolseley's staff at Assouan. His death was tragically sudden.

"Sheikh Jacob Shellaby, of Nablous, just now from England, called here. He insists: 'I cannot let you and your husband go; you will get killed, and worse. Come to Nablous and keep school. I must see your husband and tell him—it must not be that you go to Kerak.'"

From one into whose heart had been dropped the good seed, there came a message from Cairo to the Sitt: "I wish to tell you I am happy because I have found Him whom I was seeking. Your kind letter was the deciding point for me. I am expecting to be sent to the front this week.—C.J.L.G."

The Sitt wrote on the 15th:—

"Only three weeks after reaching Khartoum, General Gordon wrote to Mrs. Hall, here: 'My faith seems overpowered when I see these crowds of helpless people and know not how best to provide for them. Ask Julia (the Rev. J. Longley Hall's little girl of seven), to pray for me that my faith may be strengthened.' " The General is mourned here as a brother. Mr. Hall took a house near for him, and he spent most of his evenings with them.

* Now the wife of the Rev. William Jackson, of Cairo.

"The men are now picking the oranges from 400 gardens round Jaffa. Oranges everywhere; how lovely they are! Our delay is not to be compared with the trouble of the C's. I can see when the ships come and go from the balcony outside. Fancy this preparation for Kerak!"

Mr. C., for whose arrival Lethaby was waiting, was shipwrecked off the coast of Portugal. This event threw all thought of departure into chaos, and he wrote:—

"25th. The kaleidoscope is so often turned that I had better write, even if I bring the letter myself. I am glad that Dorcas's daughters* and you get on so well together. There is as much Christian feeling in Jaffa as in any place I know, numbers considered.

"28th. The C.'s are here at last, after three weeks of roughing it. I shall hope to get to Port Said next week, then by the Austrian boat to you. We had better, on the Monday, ride as far as Howard's Hotel at Amwas—the 'Modin' of the Maccabees—so we may get comfortably into Jerusalem. It is a shame to make the 'going up' into a purgatory."

* The Tabitha School at Jaffa, under the direction of Miss Walker Arnott, was founded by Mr. Thomas Cook, of tourist fame. He gave the first £1,000 to it.

**"Dost thou ask when comes His hour?
Then, when it shall aid thee best.
Trust His faithfulness and power;
Trust in Him, and quiet rest;
Suffer on, and hope and wait;
The Master never comes too late."**

SPITTA.

CHAPTER VIII

Still Waiting. Attempt on Kerak.
Entrance. 1885

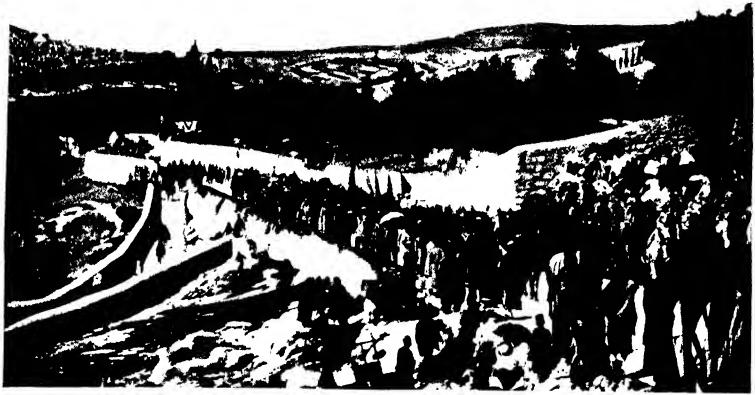
WE may be sure that our friends made the most of the fleeting weeks. Jerusalem became as familiar to them as Somersetshire and Devonshire; and both residents and pilgrims were always the objects of their keenest interest and sympathy.

On the 28th March W.L. writes to I.E.P.:—

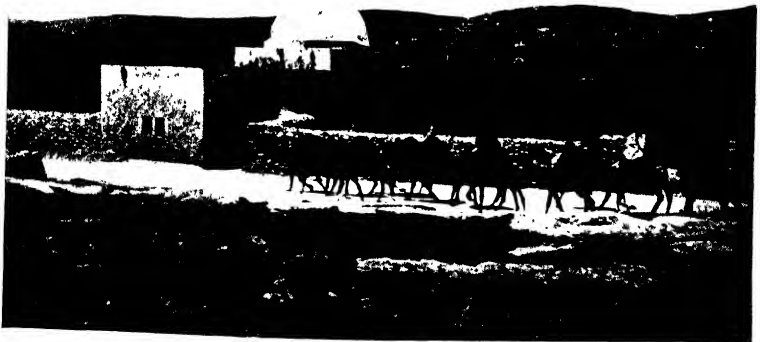
"It is the day before Palm Sunday. We have both been to-day into the Church of the Sepulchre, and seen the three entries of the Latin, Greek and Armenian patriarchs.

"As you may suppose, the 'City of the Great King' is a busy one just now. Everybody is getting ready to be specially religious.

"Near to 'the pillar which Absalom reared for himself in the King's dale' I met an interesting group of Armenian Protestants, who asked and received, and to whom I might have safely given more than I had. But the saddest thing is when a copy is torn up . . . but I



MUHAMMADAN PILGRIMS, JERUSALEM.



RACHEL'S TOMB, NEAR BETHLEHEM.

do not think more than one in eighty gets so treated. As last year, the Armenians show the greatest animosity—the Greeks greatest carelessness, the Russians most devotion, though often it is of the most superstitious sort. The Roman Catholics shepherd their sheep most carefully by taking the utmost pains that they shall not feed in the living pastures, but have only the food from their own ‘silo.’”

The Sitt tells a friend at Norton :—

“I have been giving away in five and a half weeks 900 Russian pilgrims’ gospels to the men and women who have come here from all parts of Russia in Europe and Asia. Most of them have poor but very strong clothes. Many of the women with great big Wellington boots up to their knees and big handkerchiefs bound round their heads. As they go to their church they have generally two or three long thin candles in their hands, which they give as we do at the collection—the sign that they *mean* it. On Friday, when a man had just taken a gospel, a woman came up, snatched it from his hands, and threw it on the ground as if it had been a viper. But he picked it up and put it in his bosom, while she went on abusing him and me, and making the sign of the cross to frighten the devil that she thought was in me.

“Then there are Armenians by the thousand almost, and a strange lot they are. There are many also who speak Greek. So I have Turkish, Greek, and Moslem-Greek gospels for them. . . The Abyssinians, too, beautifully brown-skinned, but very retiring, are so glad to see their own language and have one of the gospels or epistles. Besides these, I find a few of all the other nations—German, Spanish, Italian, French and others. For these I suppose I have given 300 more gospels, and hope to send in this way to the ends of the earth. . .

It is such a blessed thing to be sure that each one of these books fits each one of these hearts, no matter how hard or soft, or wise or foolish, or near or far."

At the beginning of March it was extremely hot. No rain fell and a famine was feared. Moslems and Jews proclaimed a fast. Later the rain came in abundance; the joyful password was heard, "The Kedron is flowing," and crowds daily wended their way to see the waters.

In the middle of April a number of Kerak men were in El Khuds, and negotiations were opened. They asked eight medjidehs (dollars), but agreed to seven, and received two as earnest money. But, as usual, in a few hours this advance payment was returned, and the bargain was off. Lethaby found that few really knew Kerak. With some it was most attractive, with others the blackness of darkness. But the waiting ones turned their eyes wistfully to the long line of Moab mountains in the glory of the sunrise, and sighed as they remembered that not one evangelist could be found in the whole range.

From Beirût Mr. Pritchett again counsels :—

" My advice is, go to Salt and thence to Kerak with the postman or some of the many people who are returning from Jerusalem ; but do not go on foot. I shall be greatly interested in hearing as *fully* as possible what you see and do in Kerak. I do not at all favour the idea of a small Arabic Life of Mahomet to show him up to the Moslem as an impostor. Better immeasurably to give them the lovely life of our and their Lord as set forth in

the Gospels. I think such a volume would be much liked by Moslem and Druse."

Lethaby says on the 10th June :—

"While watching and waiting for a possibility of going eastward, I am doing all I can at Arabic. . . On Tuesday I called on Mr. Temple Moore, the British Consul. . . He was personally very kind, but had to say officially that no protection must be expected. Everybody tells Mrs. L. of outrage, cruelty, murder, starvation, &c., without the possibility of doing any good. I can honestly say that 'none of these things move me'; but they move her considerably. For your prayers in the knowledge of this I particularly ask. . . Such prayers are the greatest—the only—holdfast I have, outside Divine Love."

And to the Sitt at the same time :—

"I would rather die with Stephen than live with the curse of Meroz resting on me; and would prefer never to have made a single speech in a Missionary Meeting, than first talk and then to tremble even at an attempt to tell somebody the Great Truth who does not know it. Perhaps I may go with Mr. C. to Salt on Monday."

To which the Sitt replies from Jaffa :—

"I hear that Hebron is very lovely and has gardens and fields to delight the eye. . . If you can get there and can find even one congenial soul to give you a lodging, it will perhaps be a good place to study Arabic and practise it. . . Miss Arnott asks me to remain here in charge for a while."

The good man decided to go south through Urtas to Hebron, and there see what could be done for the onward journey. He had a note of

introduction to the native doctor at Hebron, and a letter from the American Consulate to the big Sheikh, and the son of old Hamzeh, enjoining him to help the traveller "to all peace" and in getting to Kerak. If this attempt should fail, he determined to look at Jaffa as a temporary place of sojourn.

From Hebron he wrote on the 13th :—

"I am really here within three days of Kerak, and have had two colloquies with the old Sheikh Hamzeh and his son Abbas on the matter. The walk to Bethlehem was in beautiful clear, cool weather, and I probably startled the pastor at the German house by such a small pastoral and missionary outfit, but got a letter for the doctor here. . . At Miss Jacomb's I spent several pleasant hours. She says 'No!' emphatically as to Kerak; the two Miss M.'s say 'Yes!'

"*At Urtas.* B. and his wife are from 'the blue Alsatian Mountains.' They have 320 hives of bees. I came on by the beautiful and fresh 'great pools of Solomon,' and got here by noon after a long and weary walk. Nearing Hebron, one does not wonder that 'the spies' reported it as 'a goodly land.' The outspread of vines and figs and pomegranites—now in scarlet livery—is charming. . . I sleep where Geikie and Schapira not long since slept; I wish I knew which bed the Scotchman had and which the Jew, as they are both at my service. . . These two Syrians are, of course, both afraid of the lions—theirs and my own. . . Old Hamzeh's likeness is in Tristram's book. He is now more than eighty. . I arranged with him for 11½ medjidehs to take me to Kerak, wait three days, and bring me back. . . I believe one person is to be my



OLD SHEIKH HAMZEL. OF HEBRON.

sole convoy—Sheikh Abu-daouk, probably on Monday morning, on horseback.

“Sunday forenoon. Have joined in the short service. . I like Hebron, as would you. In front of this house is the well of Abraham, from which hundreds of skins must be drawn daily. . . We visited the outside of the Haram, and saw the hole into which prayers are put. . Later, I counted out $5\frac{1}{2}$ medjidehs as earnest money to my guide. . At present the way seems clear. . I leave the rest of my money here until my return. . I know nothing more.”

* * * * *

Then came silence—meanwhile prayerful hearts were being uplifted in Jaffa. By and by it transpired that the small party encountered the Mujelli robbers in the Ghor near the “Draa,” and Musa Mujelli pounced upon the frail man, robbed him, thrust back the pocket book still containing half a napoleon, which had been overlooked, keeping with disgust the $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. which came readily to hand. . One of the elderly women of the Ghor, the Ghawarineh, with motherly kindness, led the bruised and wounded man into her family tent, cared for him tenderly, giving him a bowl of “leben” (sour milk curd) and a lovely bunch of grapes. Then, covering him up, bade him sleep in peace. . . . After a delightful remedial rest he returned the next day to Hebron, and thence to Jerusalem, where the Sitt and he again met, and devoutly thanked God for the deliverance.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul" came these opportune words from I.E.P. :—

"21st. Mr. B. and I had a long talk anent your work last week. The pamphlet is out, and there will be a response. Your newest venture is one of 'absolute faith,' and God will care for you both. Here are two texts for you: 'Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord,' with 'I will guide thee with Mine eye.' Eyes of Master and servant meet, each looking towards the other. . . We have to try to rouse our people from great apathy."

W.L. to I.E.P. (from Jaffa) :—

"26th. You good people at Southport are to me what the eleven million vote of credit was to W.E.G. Please above all impress on the people that I desire a *living* interest in this work, if they give any. . . I have a measure of faith that the men whom I saw last week for the first time I shall see again, and that if others will come in the Salvation spirit, the holy Spirit will bring to pass a new thing for Palestine as far as the nineteenth century is concerned. . . . Please send us on some spiritual quinine. . . Life *in* Kerak will not be, I believe, so difficult as the way there. . . The throwing and dragging me from the horse showed that I had better go back and add a postscript to my Arabic letter, which I now proceed to do.

"There are a number of mental snapshots of my journey, which redevelop—some droll, some otherwise. There is the child, for instance, who took a bowl of milk, which I had only half drunk, and whose face was lost in it for an instant, and then emerged black and brown and painted with milk. Then the old grandad teaching his toddler to pull his ears; and, hard by, a fearful semi-idiot youth. In another encampment endless boys and

girls, quite naked, some of them listening to the protoplasm of a violin which did musical duty in an Arab tent. The persistent goats, which would aim at getting under my head when I was trying to sleep on the ground, in their preserves, I ween. But, above all, there was the fearful fact that not one of the Arabs among whom I travelled—not to speak of the Kerak men—could read ! ”

The Rev. J. R. Longley Hall approached the rebuffed but persistent missionary on the 25th : “ Whilst you are one of the ‘ waiting ones,’ can you help me in a little work I have in hand ? I am really in a hopeless muddle for some limited period.” He gladly responded, but it involved a temporary removal to Gaza.

Gaza makes Mr. Pritchett again reminiscent :—

“ You appear to have been stopped just where I was surrounded by forty naked Arabs, regular thieves, armed with clubs, spears, etc. But they let me go after an hour and a half by God’s goodness, I steadily refusing to give them one farthing, and appealing to their own Koran, while also threatening the direst vengeance from English and Turk alike, if they should hurt or rob me.

“ You have done well to defer your journey to cooler weather, and I am glad to think of your being meanwhile in Gaza. I have requested the Rev. J. R. L. Hall to send fifty of my new books to you for the Moslems of Gaza, and of all Philistia, as they come in on business. Accept also one hundred sheets of texts chosen with the view of showing that Christians worship only one God—that man needs a Saviour and must look to Him—that He is of Divine birth, and that God wills the salvation

of all who will come to Him through Christ. . . What can I further do in supplying you for Kerak or any other unsown field?"

Mr. Lethaby now revised his letter to the Sheikh Mohamed Mujelli at Kerak, asking his help and protection. He sent it to the Sitt for Mr. Hall's perusal, and to ask the Rev. Muallim Muraud to put it into good native Arabic "fit for a Sheikh to read."

This was the English translation:—

"To the renowned Sheikh of Kerak we wish peace and blessing.

"This writing is from an Englishman and his wife who have read in the books of God that long years ago Kerak had many, many people, and that the King who lived there had 'hundreds of thousands of lambs and hundreds of thousands of rams with their wool.'

"This Englishman and his wife know that the God who loved the people in those days, loves the people in Kerak now, and that the Lord Jesus has told all who love Him to do His work and go everywhere. Now they have left their town and house and garden in England, and ask that you will allow them to live, and perhaps by and bye to die, where they can do some good to those of your people whom they meet, that they may by God's blessing heal some of your sick children, comfort some of your sorrowful people, and teach some who would like to learn.

"More than 2,000 years ago God spoke to the King of Moab by one of His prophets and said, 'Make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert

to them from the face of the spoiler.' What God said then, we His servants say now to the renowned Sheikh of Kerak. And as some other of His servants said we also say, 'Thou shalt sell me meat for money that I may eat, and give me water for money that I may drink.'

"Some of our friends in England and in Syria try to make us afraid, and tell us that the Sheikh of Kerak will do us harm, or that he cannot or that he will not allow us to live in his territory, but I tell them they are wrong to say so, for God who has made us all brothers will help us to behave as brothers should to each other. I shall come and remain without gun and without gunpowder, without spear and without javelin, and I shall trust the Sheikh of Kerak as I trust the Queen of England. And will not the Sheikh trust us also? Will he not show that those who only come to do him good shall not have harm done to them? Then among those who pray to God to help him will be this Englishman and his wife whose names are

WILLIAM LETHABY,
JANE LETHABY."

Later, Mr. Lethaby presented it to Mohamed Mujelli in Kerak, and his secretary, Khowadja Isa Khusus, wrote in their presence the Sheikh's reply in Arabic for Mr. Lethaby to bring to the Sitt; viz., "I say to the Englishman, the land is in your purse; if you want anything more, ask me.

MOHAMED MUJELLI,
Sheikh of Kerak."

Even Gaza did not prove a bed of roses.

"You have no idea," says the good man, 'of the badinage and balderdash concerning Kerak. . . Of course, when all proper discount is made, the individual to whom

we wish to introduce ourselves, is very much of a Moloch, yet these are the people for us to work on. . . . On Friday I went with the colporteur here to visit three of the villages, and perhaps did more real missionary work than before. I read to the crowd the Lord's Prayer in Arabic, and now and then gave them a word besides. But it ended tragically with a regular Turkish seizure of the books, and our appearance before the Kaimakan of Gaza. These high-handed tricks *here*, and with a big society at the back, make me feel that a quiet little work outside the Sultan's power cannot be much more dangerous or hampered, and may by prayer at home and guidance abroad be more useful than the work of more cumbrous machinery. . . . My present famine of books shows me that if the Bible were not the Book it is, it would never serve, like the manna, for any wilderness and for any length of time. The last three days here have been one of those sad seasons which to Christianity are unknown. On the fact of Genesis xxii. the Muhammadans have fictionised a fast and a feast in which they make night hideous with lights and howlings for their dead. In this city, howling must be one of the most common professions. This house adjoins the largest of five cemeteries, and Friday night was a 'night of bitter cry' indeed."

Lethaby and the colporteur Nicola were taken before the Kaimakan of a big village, and after much abuse for daring to offer Christian books to Moslems, were sent off in charge of the Zaptieh back to Gaza. The Governor sat in the gate of the 'Serai.' At once the books were confiscated, and he was ordered to sit down on the ground like the rest, which he declined to do. The



ES. SALT (RAMOTH-GILEAD) WITH FOUNTAIN.

two were eventually set free, and the little man, nothing daunted, prepared to start again the next week for Kerak. He was able to write from Es Salt (Ramoath Gilead) on October 5th:—

“At 1.30 on Friday I turned my back on Jerusalem, and we got into Jericho a little after sunset. . . Leaving our beds at 1.30 a.m., and the house at 3 a.m., we crossed Jordan by the bridge a little after four, and had a halt at one of the places assigned to ‘the waters of Nimrim,’ arriving at Es Salt a little before 1 p.m., hardly twenty-four hours after leaving El Khuds. The day was given to talk, and yesterday (Sunday) to rest. At 8.30 I attended the principal service with baptism. . . This morning we were exploring and arranging early. . . It is the old tale about Kerak now I am here. . . Kerak is just the bugbear that Napoleon was eighty years ago. The Church is well attended, but there is a sad lack of someone to work among the women. But all are converts from the Greek Church, not one Moslem. The Oleanders are in splendid bloom everywhere, and, of course, early in the year the ground must be covered with beauty. The grapes are magnificent, and eaten fresh, delightfully cool and refreshing. But the travelling is horribly tiresome. It was well not to have foreseen some of the places we had to climb. But Es Salt has quite an English look about it.

“6th. I have paid three medjidehs to a man who, tomorrow, is to take me to Medeba. There I have to make the final leap. You and I must now be satisfied to be in the dark. I go into the tunnel. Don’t expect to hear for ten days. Good-bye!”

* * * * *

While he was making this dash for the goal, the man who “stood by the stuff” in England reported

that thirteen thousand copies of "The Appeal" had been sent out. The friends expressed their satisfaction, and much real sympathy was manifested.

We must be content without details of this memorable entrance into Kerak. The same journey was more than once undertaken afterwards, of which we shall have picturesque particulars

On his return to Jerusalem, this adventuresome soldier of the Cross tells I.E.P., 10th November, 1858:—

"The flower enclosed is from the top of the *real* Calvary. It will do me good to let myself out on paper. I sent you from Jaffa last Saturday fortnight a letter which is the best, and indeed the only account I can now write of Kerak and of my journey, which I fervently hope you got, for it was lengthy and 'important.'"—[This letter appears to have been lost.]—"The day's journey up here with our packages was the most toilsome I ever knew. . . The Merozites still seek to discourage us. They say the Sheikh is sure to kill me in order to get possession of my wife's person. . . You will quite understand that your brotherly letter was indeed a stimulant and a tonic. I could not for a day or two at all see what my own course was, but am now quite clear that, after such a reception, the first time, to my message and request, 'let others do as they will,' I am bound to go back, though it is of all things the hardest and most distasteful to spend long winter nights and rainy days in I know not what house, and with hardly an opportunity, maybe, of making myself useful to soul or body; for it is by life,

domestic life, among them—and more by my wife's kindly agency than my own—that I had hoped to work. . . Pray, all of you, that no further mistakes may be made, if we have made any, and that wherever we be, separate or together, the wisdom profitable to direct, may be vouchsafed. . . Rev. R.H.W. kindly suggests pilgrim work again. I only pray, 'show me Thy way.' ”

Mr. Pritchett (from Beirût) sagely, but not encouragingly, says:—

“13th. Of course you do not consider Mohamed Mujelli's word or letter as anything to build upon. He would zealously help you to reform the stone ruins into a good house on his land, and when you had so spent your own and your friends' money, he would soon find a pretext for turning you out and living there himself. There is no law in Kerak, and whether you can by purchase obtain real possession of a site I do not know. . . Did you lodge with Sheikh Isa Khusus, who twice entertained me ? ” *

Congratulations and encouragement came from Alexandria.

“18th. I am glad that your efforts have at last been crowned with success ; that you have penetrated the lion's den, and shared Daniel's immunity. . . Now that you have determined to return, I shall be glad to let you have what S.S. you think needful, and will comply with any further requests you may make. . . May the Lord give you good speed in your venture for His service.”

* Yes. He was the business factotum and private secretary of Mohamed Mujelli. He accompanied Mr. Lethaby from Salt when he first entered Kerak.

Mrs. Piercy sent a real tonic to the Sitt, on the 24th:—

“It seems to me the new element brought in by your going with Mr. Lethaby is an element of safety. Uncivilised tribes have seldom been known to molest a lady; and though their own women are not educated, even in their sense of the word, they are influenced by the superiority which education gives, especially when seen in European ladies. Then your defenceless position would be in itself a defence. I mean, the very fact of you and Mr. L. throwing yourselves in confidence upon the people and entrusting your lives to them would disarm prejudice and ill-will. . . Mr. L. cannot retreat; he cannot go alone—at least, he cannot accomplish what he has undertaken alone. On you depends the success of the whole, and it is a grand and enviable work put upon you. . . I have found in my wanderings in different parts of the world that human nature is wonderfully alike; the same hopes and fears, loves and hates. I do not apprehend that one hair of your heads will be hurt.”

So they held themselves always in readiness, and on the eighth of December Mr. Lethaby wrote:—

“This night, Mrs. L. and I think, may be our last in Jerusalem. Men with whom I stayed in Kerak have received my note and have *come for us*. But the ‘stuff’ is a terrible detainer; it will make four or five mules necessary; a four days’ journey at that. Imagine us cross-legged on the top of luggage and boxes, and the mounting and dismounting! People now begin to commend, and even admire, when we may well begin to

tremble! . . . *Wednesday noon*.—The old tale! Another hitch! The Arabs have gone, I am told, and I am like Marius in the ruins of Carthage, mid boxes and packages. Resurgam!"

The rainy season now supervened and brought a new hindrance. Patience had a fine opportunity for perfecting herself. But W.L. was not the man to hide himself away petulantly. All was *life* to him. So he continues to his friends:—

"If you were within six miles of our Saviour's birth-place, where would you prefer to spend the Christmas Eve and night? Probably your choice would be as mine. But the rains have commenced, and in earnest. However, the stars appeared at eight o'clock, as I went out by the Jaffa gate, down to the causeway which is the southern end of Gihon's lower pool . . . up past Montefiore's almshouses and the new opthalmic hospital of the Knights of St. John. . . . Then came a couple of miles of the Plain of Rephaim, without a single sound execept, as of old, a decided 'going' in the tops of the trees; while the lightning danced a minuet. . . . The convent of the Armenians is the halfway house, and being at the crest of the hill, commands both Jebus and Bethlehem. The last half of the way was discouraging—mud, stones, darkness, flitting moonlight, and oncoming tornadoes of wind and rain. At the pillar of Rachel's grave 'there was still some way to come to Ephrath.' Another half mile on, and across half an acre of pools and perils, is the little postern hole, not five feet high, in the wall of the convent-fortress, where once Chimham (Jer. xli. 17), and another time the Virgin, and then the Shepherds long, long ago, stooped and knelt. Inside the walls, a foot or eighteen inches thick, by 10.30 I cooled down in

solitary praise among the massive pillars which the great church builder ranged in four columns. Darkness was only relieved by strange gleams of moonlight.

"The upper part of this great old church the Greeks have appropriated and screened off for themselves, so that its real proportions are not easily seen. Under the altar is *the cave* known as that of the nativity. But stretching from it north-east are five or six others. In the farthest and largest, Jerome, without much doubt, lived and wrote and worked 1500 years ago.

"Presently I went into the theatre of the midnight drama I had come to see,—the Latin Church, lately built, the bottom end of which is over most of the caves. Already Bethlehem Christians were covering the floor. I wish I could describe them—the women especially. After English women they are the fairest I know; but their embroidered and gold-bespangled shawls and head dresses my terminology fails to describe. After a look round, while the poor monks were lighting their scores on scores of candles, I went down for rumination into the caves. Jerome's place takes my fancy, and so does the painting over the altar therein of the great strong man with a brawny arm and 'searching' eye on the extended Scriptures. As I looked, the five small candles below it were being lit. Of course, as their light grew stronger, the increasing force of the picture became an apt emblem of the thing itself—more light, more clearness, better result from the search. I did not ruminate long, however, and again went up to the fuller and larger scene. Now by scores all nationalities seemed to pour in; and before long a burst from the organ accompanied the procession of priests, small boys and big patriarchs. The Latin patriarch of Jerusalem is a tall ecclesiastic with a typical Vatican face, which one would readily associate with a Xavier or a Loyala; and



CHRISTMAS AT BETHLEHEM.

almost as much to be pitied for the paraphernalia of millinery which he donned and doffed in rapid succession—he was a big doll in jewels and gold—after which ‘he made his God and ate Him!’ . . . About 1 a.m. came the ‘*coup-de-main*’ (literally). The baby image is preceded and accompanied by a score of candle bearers, the high-mitred man passes down the Church, along the corridor, out into the *old* Church, and despite abundant wind and rain, descends to deposit the baby image in the manger. After incense and Latin Scripture, the tedious way is repassed. Then more ‘mass’ and a great rush of communicants, natives and others. . . . At 9 a.m. came high mass. . . . I had rather be superintendent of Chester than Latin Patriarch. . . . Later there came a lull in the downpour, and I started for Jerusalem. But I had to take temporary lodgment on the way with poor old Rachael in her tomb. . . . It is sad to see how little of real worship, or even appreciation of worship, there is in it all, and still least where surely the facts of A.D. 4 should make it easiest. . . . Yet for all that, and more, Christ *was* born in Bethlehem, and I ‘therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice.’ . . .

“30th. A splendid day; myself in suspense still. The waters of Jordan are high, and may be any time the next three months.”

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Mr. Lethaby now acted for some weeks with Mr. Wilson at the Bible Depôt in Jerusalem at a time of pressure, and afterwards undertook the “Pilgrim Distribution” till Easter.

"After an hour a paleness drew up in the south-east; the sky gradually lightened to a deep blue, the stars shone silver, and the blood-red gibbous moon crept suddenly above the edge of Moab and looked over into the Dead Sea."

DR. G. A. SMITH.

CHAPTER IX

Approaching the Goal Again. 1886

THE New Year brought a fresh draught from the perennial spring:—"January 14th. God is holding you and sees all the future. . . . As a veil to your eyes is over all, you must let Him act according to what He sees. . . . Meanwhile, cheer up always! . . . To wait is hard work for you. I know your temperament."

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Repeated offers of safe conduct to Kerak came, but each proved a new mirage.

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"Friend" writes to friend on the 26th:—

"The porcupine quill to which this is a foil is the one thing I brought back from my Kerak trip,—please accept this first fruit. I had yesterday forenoon a quiet half-hour in Golgotha, and picked the leaves I enclose. The larger flowers are from a cleft in the rock where, I like to think, our Rock was cleft for us. The scene was yesterday morning lovely and quiet in the extreme. The Kerak mountains look well thence.



THE RIVER JORDAN.

"17th February. The strangest leading has been from Sur-Bahir. There came a man in from this village last Saturday and offered to let us have a camel for Kerak on Monday, but the Pilgrim work intervened. I found that one of the family had met with an accident. What a sight it was; a gun had burst. 'No doctor for fellaheen,' they said. Ahmed, 18 years old, had been lying in this state since Thursday. So I came into the young English doctor, got from him cotton wool, bandages and carbolic oil, and at night started off again. . . . The attempt to do anything surgical was new to me, but the thanks of all parties were profuse. The young man came in afterwards to the hospital. Here is apparently a help Kerakwards.

"24th. We are having the latter rains indeed, though there will in all likelihood be later and latest besides. Yesterday, an irascible old Russian woman spat on me and on the books. Mistaken religious zeal. It is a good thing to know no more Russian than the name of the Saviour and the Evangelists."

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Never surely were messages from those who really entered into the inner meaning of an enterprise like this so gratefully welcomed as by these two. Such a letter of more than private and personal interest from Mrs. Sheldon Amos, dated Ramleh, 8th March, cannot well be withheld. Judge Amos, of Cairo, had recently died:—

"I fear I may have failed to answer your kind letter so long that you may have found an entrance into Es Salt. I was quite relieved when I heard some months ago that you had not gone straight off to Moab. And I see and hear in different ways that you are in better and more

hopeful relations to the country of your desires. . . . I feel as much a wanderer as you do, I fancy. As yet I do not clearly see what my work or where my home must be. All I see is that a chief object must be to prepare my children to be as trained servants as their father was.

“When I leave Egypt, I leave many interests and hopes that I had thought to see advanced further. But I have the comfort of feeling sure that we have both been used here, and are being used now for a time apart. We shall serve and rejoice together again. It is a great thing to have learned as I have learned, that death only tightens and strengthens the marriage tie of those who love and serve their Living Head. There is no real separation where Death has been swallowed up in Life. Cheer your heart with this knowledge when you are alone and anxious.”

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Lethaby had also the relief and advantage of intercourse with many prominent English visitors to Jerusalem. He says:

“On Sunday, 19th, after dinner, the great majority of English-speaking people went to hear the Rev. Newman Hall at the C.M.S. Church on ‘Lo, I am with you always.’ It was the finest delineation of Christ’s risen humanity I have heard since Morley Punshon’s time. In his exhortation to the workers in Jerusalem, he, with a wave of his long arm, pointed to the hills themselves as he included ‘You who are going over to the wild mountains of Moab.’ Can you realise how we felt?”

“On the summit of Golgotha we sang ‘Rock of Ages’ and ‘When I survèy the wondrous Cross.’ Dr. Monro Gibson gave an address, and four or five prayed.”

Major-General F. T. Haig became interested in the Moab project, and for succeeding years was a staunch friend. He wrote 26th March :—

“ I have been trying to draw the attention of Christians to Arabia as a long neglected, but now in some quarters an open field for missionary effort. . . . The C.M.S. have a Medical Mission at Aden, and Mr. Keith Falconer is also there prospecting for work on his own account, or possibly in connection with the F.C.S. But it seems to me that something might be done amongst the Bedawin in the North, and also in Oman in the East, among the settled Arabs. May an abundant blessing rest on your own efforts for the good of its neglected tribes.”

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Mr. Lethaby was glad, by invitation, to again assist the Rev. J. R. Longley Hall at Jaffa in some congestion of work, to which he gave a fatiguing fortnight.

Floral glory was now just at its height. He saw for the first time what is supposed to be the old level of Roman pavement in the precincts of the Prætorium, and, by baksheesh, got to the top of Antonia and the barracks, on the site of those into which Paul was taken. What a scene it was! With a friend he undertook a little bit of amateur exploration of what “is almost certainly the real Golgotha.” He narrates :—

“ As the result of four hours’ toil we cleared out a vast lot of earth, bones (some human), and a little pottery. We revealed besides two subordinate tombs in the same area, and took a tracing of a cross which had been made on the wall. While thus occupied, two gentlemen asked

for admission. They were Sir H. Acland and Canon Liddon. The Canon says the cross shows it to have been a Christian habitation in the earlier ages, *after* having been used as a tomb. . . . On the very summit of the hill is a heap or cairn, on which I have often stood as being within ten feet of where the Central Cross was lifted. Now I find that this is a hollow—a poor man's grave—into which the bodies of the poorest and lowest have been indiscriminately thrust; and on removing a stone or two, a ghastly sight is visible. So "They made His grave with the wicked."

The Sitt tells of an interesting rencounter at the Mediterranean Hotel on Easter Eve:—

"This morning I was told that Sir Wm. McArthur wished to see me. He came with a clerical friend, who clasped my hand warmly and said, 'I am so glad to have found you. I believe in enthusiasts.' Sir William was at once cordial. 'We must have a long talk,' he said. Their greeting was like the Mission House, with City Road Chapel and Exeter Hall walking in to say 'How do you do!' . . . Sir William most emphatically insists that whatever you may think it *your* duty to do, it is utterly out of the question for me to go alone with you into the power of such people as the Mujelli and his Moslems. Mr. A., though a thorough believer in Mad Missionaries, thinks with his friend, but fears to grieve you by saying so much."

But the husband puts the other side to I.E.P.:—

"19th May. There is a danger lest 'the Sitt' should let '*I dare not*' wait upon '*I would.*' Sir William has bogeyized her somewhat, and so, like Mahomet's coffin, she was suspended 'twixt Heaven of duty and Earth of

BALDER

ŞİDON

DAMASCUS.



ACCO

HAIFA

CÆSAREA

JOPPA

ASHKELON .

GAZA

RECORDED
INDEXED

BEER-LAHAI-ROI
KADESH-BARNEA

IT SHELL

• KID OF NOAB

ТОРНЕ

BOZRAH

PETRA

irresolution. . . I should tell you, however, that the Rev. R.H.W. and his good wife have been since. She has so finely bantered Mrs. L. about the individual she designates 'Abimelech,' that my wife is now almost allowing the needle to swing round to the true polestar.

. . Under the Turkish Government there is more and more of bondage and repression. . . In Kerak the Sultan and his government are, at present, nonentities; and though 'Abimelech' is a mighty bad bundle of humanity, yet he cannot be worse than some of the Napoleonic or Thakombau family. If we had lots of visible resources I should think it possible they would be tapped, but with not much more than books and mustard plasters we need not trouble greatly."

The Sitt enclosed a paragraph setting forth her own bewildered but inflexible purpose:—

"My perplexity is great. However, God reigns as truly for my safety as for my husband's; and as he is determined to go, I, against my own conviction of the wisdom of it, go with him; taking my life in my hand, literally not knowing what may befall us. . . My visit to Bethlehem was a restful time. I enclose a flower gathered in sight of 'the shepherds' field.' . . I cannot and will not leave my husband to fight the battle alone in Kerak. So together we go or not at all. I wish all friends to understand that *he* wished *now* to place me in safety with my friends in England, and himself go, unequal as he is in health to bear all the difficulty and discomfort. I know that his soul yearns for the salvation of these Keraki. . . I now set aside my fears, and looking to our Lord and Master alone for strength of body and mind, I am unreservedly ready to go to Kerak."

W.L. wrote on the 15th :—

"Ascension Day has come and gone. This week is the fifty-second since my first approach to Kerak, and the repulse with a 'beshalik' returned, but not a shoelace abstracted.

"It will interest you to know that I have just read through, intelligently, the Gospel of St. Mark in Arabic in about four days, having just before gone through the Acts of the Apostles. I have been reading two notable books, 'Conder's Heth and Moab' and 'Stanley's Eastern Church'; the latter is more interesting than any fiction."

A consignment from England, which included insect powder, mustard leaves, pills, plasters, ginger, quinine, wax, belladonna, calendula, and arnica, foreshadowed real business.

On the general subject of Eastern evangelization Mr. Lethaby held strong theories. He believed that the face of the Eastern question would have been changed, and the latter day glory hastened if, say, Barnabas Shaw, John Hunt, or James Calvert had gone to the near East instead of going where they did.* "What is wanted here," he said, "more almost than anywhere, is simple straightforward appeal to the people as sinners."

On the 8th of September Mr. Lethaby sets forth the immediate plan of campaign :—

"Kerak is a microcosm, and has its Czars and Bismarcks and Boulangers. 'Twixt here and Kerak

* See note at end of chapter.

there are four or five tribes in possession, and with one of them, just about Pigsaw and Bethbaal-meon, our village heroes of Sur Bahir are close allies. But that tribe, the Hameideh, is now at war with Kerak. . . Hassan and another man will go with us to the half-way place, Medeba. We two ride on a camel in two cradles, one on either side the animal. There will have to be a donkey to carry two small boxes, one with petroleum, the other with provisions, &c. . . Our onward steps have been, by desire, stayed that the people of Hassan's family may do their Commemoration together of Abraham's faith. '*Oh ! for a faith like his !*'"

The start was actually made on the 16th September.

NOTE.—*Evangelization of the near East.* There is an interesting and pertinent record at the Wesleyan Mission House, dated March, 1823, quoted in the connexional Magazine, August, 1909:—"Mr. John Carne, of Penzance, in an interview with the Committee, reported most favourably of the prospect of a Mission to Egypt and the Holy Land, which he had recently visited. He thought Jerusalem the most eligible position for missionary exertions in the East.

"A missionary stationed there," he says, "would have constant access to the Jews, the Greeks, and Armenian Christians. Annually, at Easter, he might converse with thousands of pilgrims who resort to that city ; many places, also in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, might be visited, and a large field presents itself for religious labours. The climate is very favourable, and protection would be granted by the Government, on account of the respect in which the British character is held in that part of the Turkish Dominions."

In 1824 the W. M. Conference dedicated the Rev. Charles Cook, who had been working in South France to the "Palestine Mission," with the added note, "another is to be sent." The next year the "Mission to Palestine" heads the Asia Section with the note, "three are to be sent"; but Mr. Cook had returned to South France. In 1826 the gradual disappearance of this Mission from the "Minutes" is heralded by "two are to be sent." This was followed, sadly enough in the two or three succeeding years, by "vacant for the present," until, in 1830, the Holy Land ceased to have place as a Mission Station by this Society.



PART II
KERAK

**"My heart crieth out for Moab. . . My bowels
sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts
for Kir-heres."**

ISAIAH xv. 5; xvi. 11.

CHAPTER I

Moab and Kerak

NOW that the missionaries are definitely "under weigh" for their "desired haven," it will be of interest to call up some echoes of the life story of Kerak from the faint past.

The "burden of Moab" has been borne ever since its unholy beginnings in the family of Lot. The cradle was Zoar, which recent students place, more or less confidently, to the East of the Jordan, and to the North-East of the Dead Sea. The travellers from Jericho to Kerak, therefore, by the way traversed so frequently by those whose dogged steps are recorded in the following chapters, really follow the line which marked the growth of the Moabitish people.

The more ancient peoples, the Emin, gradually became extinct before the Moabites, who, with fairly settled and peaceful habits, did not move much from their original seat. Their centre was in the rich highlands which crown the eastern side

of the chasm of the Dead Sea, and extended northwards as far as the foot of the mountains of Gilead. This rich elevated tract, forty or fifty miles in length by ten or twelve in width, and South of the Arnon gorge, was known as the "field of Moab."

Here is Kerak, which, like an eyrie, can be seen across the intervening "hill-country of Judæa" and the "Sea of Lot" from the summit of Olivet itself.

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Moab has a weird charm for the Bible student. There was, to begin with, the cousinhood with the "chosen people." All through Old Testament times, little bits of sunshine or shadow touched the Eastern horizon of those who were on the other side of Jordan. The Moabitish mountains were the place of the Judæan sunrising.

But she was one of the earlier barriers to the advancing Hebrew hosts from the wilderness; and Israel had "to fetch a compass" to the East, and creep among the mountains to the North of the Arnon to get to the doorway of Canaan. The story of Balak, the Moabitish King, and the picturesque happenings clustering round him and the half-inspired soothsayer and eastern prophet Balaam, have their setting among these rocks.

It was from a Moabitish sanctuary that Moses viewed the "Promised Land," and it was in one of the ghors of "Pisgah, before Beth-peor," that "God buried him." In connection with the later



JANE LETHABY (1896).



WILLIAM LETHABY (1886).

blood-feud between Moab and Israel, one cannot fail to respect the King of Moab, Eglon, who, when the faithless Benjamite hero Ehud came to him "as he was sitting by himself alone in his summer parlour," and accosted him with "I have a message from God unto thee," immediately "*arose out of his seat*" to receive the Divine Word?

The whole book of Ruth is fragrant with the sweetness of the daughter of Moab, who was destined to be the ancestress of David and of the Christ.

Did not David visit the land of his ancestors and commit his parents to the protection of the King of Moab, among his ancient kindred, when he was hard pursued by Saul? There is a tradition that it was a betrayal of this trust which brought the deep shadows twenty years later, when Israel practically exterminated Moab; and it was the spoil taken from the Moabitish cities and sanctuaries which went to swell the treasure acquired for the future temple of Jehovah. This was the earliest fulfilment of the prophecy of Balaam: "Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of Ar, that is, of Moab."

Moab eventually recovered this blow, as it shared in the universal peace of the succeeding years. It was, however, a doubtful advantage, for Moabitish women were found in the royal harem at Jerusalem, and the high-place for Chemosh, "the abomination of Moab," was consecrated on

the mount facing Jerusalem. And there it remained until its defilement by Josiah nearly four centuries afterwards.

At the death of Ahab, Moab was paying an enormous tribute, testifying to the rigour of the spoils, and the wealth of the natural resources of the little country—"not so large as the county of Huntingdon." Then Mesha threw off the yoke. At last the struggle collected itself at Kir-haraseth, then a newly-constructed fortress, and almost certainly the Kerak of our modern story. It was a forlorn hope. A tragedy followed the siege. "The King and his eldest son, the heir to the throne, mounted the wall, and, in the sight of the thousands who covered the sides of the vast amphitheatre, the father killed and burnt his child as a propitiatory sacrifice to Chemosh." But Mesha had to submit to a mightier power than Chemosh or Baal-peor. The famous "Moabite Stone," a cast of which is now in the British Museum, recording all this, becomes of intense interest to us.

In Isaiah xv. and xvi "the burden of Moab" pictures the condition of the nation 150 years later than the calamity which overtook Mesha; and Jeremiah (chap. xlviii.) speaks of a century or more still subsequent. Into this history it is not our business here to enter.*

Moab shared with Israel the terrors of the Eastern invasion, and afterwards became a prey

* The whole story is expanded in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible in the late Sir George Grove's article "Moab," to which we are



GENERAL VIEW OF KERAK.

to the "men of the East," the Bedawin of the great desert of the Euphrates, the true Arabs.

It was a Moabite, Sanballat, who was one of Nehemiah's most active opponents, and whose ridicule and scurrility he successfully combated.

In the time of Josephus, Moab, (he says) "was a very great nation." The name Kir-Moab lingered as late as the sixth century after Christ; since which '*Kerak*' has superseded the older name.

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As to Kerak itself, it was one of the two chief strongholds of Moab—Ar being the other. It is mentioned by the geographers Ptolemy and Stephanas, A.D. 536. In the beginning of the twelfth century, under King Fulco, a castle was built there which became an important station for the Crusaders. In 1183 they sustained a fruitless attack from Saladin, and the district was known at that time as the Belka. The Crusaders believed it to be Petra; and in the Greek Church to-day, the Bishop of Petra is in reality bishop of Kerak.

A general description of the town by Sir G. Grove will help us to realise the immediate surroundings of the Lethabys:—

"It lies about six miles south of 'Ar' (Rabbath-Moab) and about ten miles from the Dead Sea, upon the highland plateau which forms this part of the country, and not far from its Western edge. . . It is built upon the top of a

steep hill, surrounded on all sides by a deep and narrow valley, which again is completely enclosed by mountains rising higher than the town and overlooking it on all sides. . . . The town itself is encompassed by a wall, to which, when perfect, there were but two entrances, one to the South, the other to the North, tunnelled through the ridge of the natural rock below the wall for the length of 100 or 120 feet. The wall is defended by several large towers; and the western extremity of the town is occupied by an enormous mass of buildings—on the South the Castle Keep, on the North the seraglio of El-Medek edh Dhaker. Below these two buildings is apparently a third exit, leading to the Dead Sea. . . .

“The elevation of the town can hardly be less than 3,000 feet above the Mediterranean, and it is much more above the Dead Sea at its feet.” Near a ruined mosque on the heights immediately above the town, a view is obtained of the Dead Sea, and in clear weather, of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, towards which we shall often find our friends looking wistfully.

In this Kerak, William Lethaby's work centred for several years, and to this section we now turn.



THE FORTRESS, KERAK.

"He had an insatiable zest for all experience, not the pleasurable only, but including that which brings home to a man the pinch and sting of existence, as it is realized by the disinherited of the world."

COLVIN ON R.L.S.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us."

ST. PAUL (II. Cor. v. 14).

CHAPTER II

Entrance. Making Friends. 1886

WE rejoin our nomads in a Bedawin tent, East of the Jordan, on Friday evening, 18th September, 1886.

"You will be thankful to know," says the Sitt to their friend, Miss Barlee, in Jerusalem, "that we have been safely brought on our way so far. But oh, I understand *now* the expression, 'tired with the greatness of the way.' Having rested as well as was possible for the heat at Jericho, we started early, and we were glad at five o'clock to cross Jordan by the bridge, and then at the camel's slow pace to toil up the pass by which Joshua came down,—Pisgah in front of us and Canaan behind. Mr. L. was very poorly, and I was quite 'sea-sick' (!) with camel-riding, but am better to-day. We start after evening meal for Kerak, the 'son of this tent' going with us.

"Many Kerak men have come to have a look at us. The 'mother of the tent' has brought eggs and a little milk. . . . When we came over the highest mountains near Pisgah yesterday afternoon, although almost too much fatigued to enjoy it, we felt that such a place with

such a view was worthy of such an event as the death of Moses. How vivid are Mrs. C. F. Alexander's words as we stand in sight of this majestic hill :—

“ By Nebo's lonely mountain,
 On this side Jordan's wave,
 In a vale in the land of Moab
 There lies a lonely grave.
 And no man knows that sepulchre,
 And no man saw it e'er,
 For the angels of God upturned the sod,
 And laid the dead man there.

“ O lonely grave in Moab's land !
 O dark Beth-Peor's hill !
 Speak to these curious hearts of ours
 And teach them to be still.
 God hath His mysteries of grace,
 Ways that we cannot tell ;
 He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
 Of him He loved so well.”

The toilsome journey was continued, and it was after dark when they found a resting place in an Arab tent in Medeba.

“ Friday,”—says Mr. Lethaby, “ was a terrible day of pain and waiting, and it was not until two hours before Saturday's dawn that we, on mule and horse, commenced the stage which should then have been half done. The ink is not black enough and language is not strong enough to write of the ravine Zerka, and the great gorge of the Arnon, ‘ Mojib.’ At last these were passed, and we had, to our grief, to sleep again in tents four or five hours from Kerak. A Moslem Arab knows nothing of a Sabbath rest, so at dawn we mounted again, and, past many a ruin, and through many a wady, had to creep

along on our beasts, till at last one of the strangest cities in the world came in view. . . . We were in sight of the place where 2 Kings iii. 26, 27 was enacted."

So the goal was reached at last, and the first lines of the new chapter were sent by the Sitt to Jerusalem :—

" 21st. It is not easy to write as I am trying to do in a native house, of which our kind host has *given* us the best side room—quite a tiny one ; and there are with us fowls and cats and many people, and twin babies, often crying. But, with all the attending discomfort, we are indeed thankful to be with friends whom we feel able to trust, Thanks to Dimitry Damian*, his letter brought us here, but not until we had been much troubled as we were nearing the city, by the coming of the Sheikh's brother, and others. Mr. L. refused to give baksheesh, explaining his former visit, and his ruling brother's permission for us to come. Whereat he laughed outright : but when he saw the seal, he was moved to say, ' Taïb ' (good), whereupon my husband put his hand on the Sheikh's head, blessed him, and wondered at what he had done. Then he dismounted from his beautiful white mare, and ordered Mr. L. to mount, meanwhile taking hold of *my* animal's head, and turning us round to take us prisoners. This was a trying moment, but, in secret, our hearts were uplifted for deliverance. His nephew in the meantime had helped himself to the last of Miss Lindsay's loaf. But I protested, and insisted that he should give it back, and the cloth it was wrapped in. Another sheikh then took it away and gave it back to me.

" I am so thankful I was *helped* not to show *fear* to them ; though we were in a very weak state, having

*A dragoman : formerly with Cook's.

ridden from Medeba on the previous day from three or four in the morning until dark, then up again and continuing the ride for hours, with very little comfort, except the consciousness we were trying to do our duty, and trusting God to bring us through.

"We were escorted by the Sheikh up the rocky heights into Kerak, with crowds around us, to the house of our present host. Best carpets were down. After two or three hours I was allowed to step up into our little sanctum, and rest, the host peremptorily dismissing the people. Abdullah Madinat, our landlord, is a Christian Arab of the, so-called, Greek Church,—really the old Eastern Church of St. Chrysostom.

"He tells us he has a house of two rooms, with good water which we can have, and to-day we hope to see about it. The Sheikh who troubled us, put up his spear against the house, indicating that he had not done with us. So we had to pay as 'entrance fee'—not '*baksheesh*,' of course!—two medjidehs,* by the advice of our host."

The Sitt further reports to Miss Jacomb at Bethlehem:—

"*7th October.* This is the eighteenth day since we arrived here. From the first we have had very many people, Moslem and Christian, for simple medicines. . . . By the time we get into the house which is being built for us we hope to have other medical assistance. . . . Our principal need is and will be a Christian Helper who can perhaps speak a little English as well as her native Arabic. . . . I see by the welcome we get everywhere in the homes, that there is quite an opening for women's work, and I am sure it would bring a blessing with it. I mean quiet Bible reading and talks with the women. Could you spare T. if she is willing to come? I have

* Medjideh, four shillings. Piastre, 2½d.

already written to our Ladies' Auxiliary asking them to allow us a grant, which would permit of such a helper."

Miss Butler, of the "Children's Medical Mission," was greatly moved by the appeal which she received from Kerak. She says, writing to Dr. Maxwell, editor of "Medical Missions at Home and Abroad":—

"Never in my life, I think, did 'my heart cry out for Moab . . . because Kir of Moab is laid waste' (Isaiah xv. 5) till yesterday; but the cry now awakened will scarcely be stilled till something has been done to repair the desolation."

Lethaby's appeal was this:—

"*21st October.* I am not yet an adept at writing on my knees with a six-months' old pen.

"Two days ago your report got to me here and hastened my writing to you. Years, years ago, I read your proofs and admired your work; now you read my proof that I have tried to imitate it.

"Where nobody else is, we may be of service, and we have certainly found that place in coming here, which is as isolated as it is destitute, and as miserable as it is romantic.

"While Jerusalem has fourteen or fifteen hospitals, never a medical man or medicine box has come here for the sake of the people of the city, numbering from 4,000 to 5,000, and including the district over which the Sheikh of Kerak rules several thousands more. Nor is there any more care from the outside for the soul's enlightenment. A great gulf separates between this place and the open Bible, though I have much of sympathy and praise for the few of the Greek Church, who, here, as the heart and front of Christianity, have

had their school, church, morning and evening prayer, with its oft-repeated crossings, kissing of pictures, and absurdities. . .

"From our small stock of medicine we soon began to give to those we thought we could benefit; and it is because we find our very success embarrassing, that I am persisting in thus writing to you to beg for such drugs or other help as you may be able to forward or contribute. . . I give advice, such as an educated Englishman knows to be safe; and I know also that it is to diet and conduct that these people must principally look. . . None would doubt the advisability of Mrs. Lethaby rubbing oil into the shoulders of a poor tortured girl, who, at the next visit was basking in the sunshine with a smile upon her face; or her giving to an infant an egg or a little Liebig, with just a drop of essence of ginger, until the poor little wizened face begins to show a smile; or her doing up a poor woman's leg with carbolised oil. . .

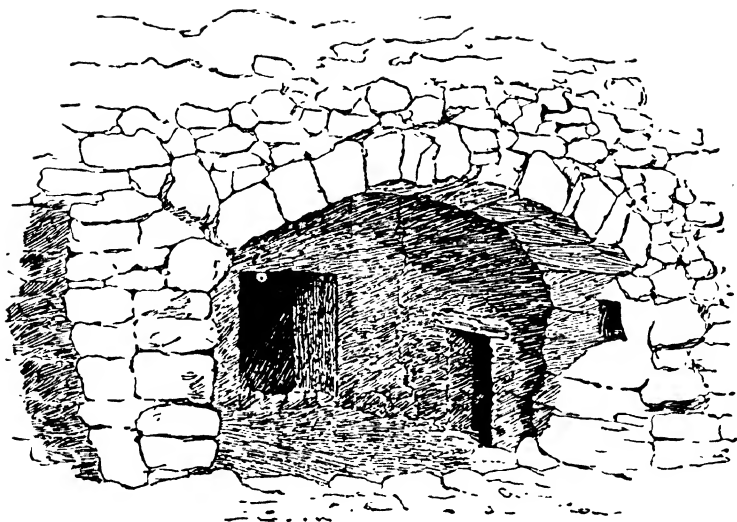
"To the Christian pioneer there are great inducements. From where I write the great Hajj* is only a few hours' distant, where I hope to see God's Word sold before I die. The other side of it, and all to the South, is only Muhammadan desert to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf, or to Aden and the Indian Ocean, with millions of 'Arabia's desert rangers' and citizens, unvisited by a Christian evangelist since the scourge of Islam was out-poured."

Needless to say, there was early and generous response to this appeal for medical supplies, greatly enheartening these amateur dispensers.

On the 27th the Sitt continues to Miss B. :—

"The confusion created by the twin babies, a year and a half old, with the usual outcry every few minutes of

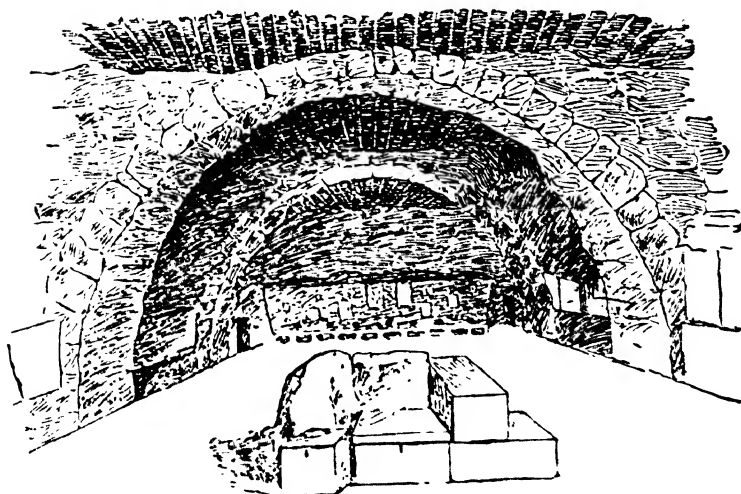
*The pilgrim route between Damascus and Mecca.



ENTRANCE TO THE MISSION HOUSE.

THE LETHABY RESIDENCE. KERAK.

From Pencil Sketches by Major-General Haig.



INTERIOR.

mother and grandmother supposed to be in unison, throughout the night, has made sleep impossible except by snatches. The men are now measuring out corn* and making a great dust. I should not mend matters were I to go, as sometimes we do, on to the flat mud roof for quiet, as the wind is full of dust to-day.

"We hoped to have been in the so-called 'new house' ere this, but it will take some time yet before we can possibly live in it.

"The houses have no windows; and too often these people shut the one door. Then one has either to wait till it opens again to admit a little of the beautiful outdoor light, or go out and soon have a crowd of men, women and children all about us. . . .

"Last week Mr. L. was asked to go two hours' ride to the elder brother of Sheikh Mujelli, who had fever badly for seven days. The servant of the Greek priest went with him, and we are very thankful that the remedies were blest to his recovery. On the way there Mr. L. saw the ruling Sheikh Mohamed Mujelli, who spoke peaceably, and to whose little son Fifan we gave the doll you kindly provided—the *only one in Kerak*. I do not think there is a single toy here for any child.

"Since breakfast we have been to a Moslem house to see a nice lad of eleven who is ill with fever. Yesterday's medicine had given sensible relief, and they are very grateful. . . . Oh, we cannot help wishing there were a real Dr. W. here with dispensary and helpers, for we do not care to be looked upon as 'hakim' (doctor) when it is only the simplest remedies which we use. We have nothing to do with chronic cases, and there are, alas! many; and no remedy can they think of better than

*The Kerak houses have a recess ("Kasany" or "Maksin") reserved for their corn, which cannot be reached from the *outside*, and the use of this had been reserved by the landlord.

enormous doses of dirty English Epsom salts, and the application of red-hot iron to scarify even tiny babies and old people. The eye lotion has proved a great benefit to many babies. I have had to show the mothers how to wash the poor little eyes before applying the lotion. The box of medicines, &c., which came through your Society from Mrs. Surr, of London, has indeed paved our way. We hope for a fresh supply before the cold and rain set in. Some very nice *old* folks here are suffering, and we have no relief for them.

“You can fancy us, as winter comes on, with a Kerak fire, of cow-dung, in the centre of the room. If it rains, the door is shut, and the smoke tries to find its way out through a four-inch square hole in the roof, *not* over the fireplace. I have tried to get them to make an opening which should do for a window. But our Sheikh Abdullah insists that it would not be safe to have another opening as the ‘dishiemen’ (robbers) would shoot and rob us.

“The older folk have lived in such terror from Moslem enemies, real and fancied, that they inspire fear; but ever since we have been here there is a different kind of feeling in some of the men and women, who begin to say, ‘In Kerak, no enemies, all friends!’ So we have found it as far as we can at present judge. . .

“I could not yet ask any nice Christian girl to make the sacrifice and come out to help me. But if we get into the house, and manage once more to live with a measure of cleanliness, I want very much to make such arrangements in the house and in visiting, that these really nice men and women may *see and value* the use of water and common-sense decency.

“The river is more than half-an-hour’s walk down a most romantic valley, with flowers and maiden-hair ferns in abundance. I went down with the fatherly priest and

his nieces and nephews. They did the family washing, while their uncle caught some lovely fish and had them cooked for me. I much enjoyed the day and the friendliness of this family. They came to Jerusalem last spring, and the girls are likely to visit the city again early in the New Year, and say they wish I would travel with them, staying a week or two and returning when they do. We shall see."

G.P. sent a remittance to Kerak through Frutiger's bank at Jerusalem, and wished he "could send ten times as much."

A contribution to the Mission from the revered "L.B." greatly touched them; and especially the accompanying note:—

Leicester, Nov, 9th. In memory of Jacob Stanley: One Guinea. A stone for the stronghold of Moab, from the sling of a fallen warrior; being one pound, the last of a *last* gift from a Father; and one shilling, the first pebble in the sling of his grandson." Adding:—"I cannot think of anything that would appeal so strongly to my father's sympathies were he alive, as would your unconventional, devoted, God-honouring work."

"The possibility of staying in Kerak is always doubtful," says Mr. Pritchett; "still St. Paul, or any apostle of old, would have done more than that for Christ. (*See 2 Cor. xi. &c.*). . . For years I tried to get friends to come and live at Gaza, . . . and you, most unreasonable man, are trying in your pamphlet to drag poor women out to Kerak. . . Mrs. Lethaby must be the first Englishwoman who ever ventured into that

town; or certainly the first who ever attempted to sojourn there since the Crusaders left it."

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Early in December Mr. Lethaby found it necessary to go to Jerusalem to receive goods from England and to make purchases. On his return journey he thus writes to I.E.P. from Medeba:—

"16th. My hours in Jerusalem were filled with talk, work, and kindness. . . These Kerak folk are of the rock, rocky; and though the rain came down in sheets, they insisted that they would start; and they did, promising that all the packages—I had two mules' burden and a man-laden horse—should be sufficiently protected from the rain. But, alas! when we got to Jericho, I found that the boxes would have to lie out in the wet all night. . . I put some waterproof sheets which had been given me in J. partly over them . . and laid myself thereon till that rain was overpast, and then lay under the shelter of a tower. But what compensations came! Never did I feel more thankful for *sunlight* than for the first consciousness of the *lunar* advent. And when her light increased and I could see somewhat of the North, towards which I faced, I remembered how One had come along there who 'had not where to lay His head.' The next thought, something about the 'fellowship of His sufferings,' though most daring, was also most delightful. . .

"I kept on horseback till the early morning, and then climbed to 'Pisgah's height' on foot. . . Fearfully cold blasts of rain, enveloped us two or three times in their icy folds. The mules seemed to fall a score of times, and the boxes and their contents were wrecked in the mud. . . But something like hope came as I turned into the courtyard of Khalil Sunaar, where I write.

"I was lifted off the horse by the son, fire was kindled, my shoes were got off, heavy furs were lent for coverlet, and coffee was made. Such is the best side of Moab life. But they fast forty days before Christmas, so diet was sparing—bread and 'dibs,' a sort of grape treacle. To-day I write in the open sunshine; our men lying about, and the flies disturbingly busy.

"They again ask us to leave Kerak and come here, where they will let us have a house free, &c. . . . That may be a call for *some other* couple to come and live here as we are trying to do there.

"Medeba is a modern (ten years old) resuscitation of a ruined Roman and Moabite city, only half way to Kerak—two days from Jerusalem. The majority are Latin Roman Catholics, the minority of the Greek Church. Perhaps some David may step into the battlefield with sling and stone, and be a wonderful helper to us beyond.

"*21st December.* Mr. L. arrived on Sunday evening," the Sitt tells Miss B. "He walked most of the way, and the men jeered at his shivering gait and fearful jolting. . . . So many thanks for the extreme care and thoughtfulness of all your purchases and packing. The plum-pudding will really make us feel something like Christmas.

"I have been almost too much looked after while Mr. L. was away. The old Sheikh Abdullah, the Christian father of Isaac Madinat,* who came with Mr. L., would insist that he must for the sake of *my* safety and the house, sleep on the floor beside our fire. So with his loaded gun, and pot of coffee and pipe, he literally watched me, while I, screened as best I could be,

* The Mujellis are said to have been originally Hebron men, who came over and usurped the Sheikdom. When Mohamed Mujelli was a little child, he was brought up as foster-brother in the home of Abdullah Madinat, a family of Greek Christians. Abdullah and Mohamed continued good friends. The Sunaars are another family of Greek Christians.

slept safe and free from fear in my little 'mustaba' (recess)—a place something like where you keep your boxes. They wondered I was not afraid of Moslems, and robbers, and worse; but I gave them the ninety-first Psalm and they quite understood."

To I.E.P., W.L. wrote on the 22nd :—

"Absence from this place has made it dearer. Saturday forenoon we rode into the Zerka ravine, and to my grief left there Saturday midnight, when the quarter moon rose. All night, all day, we rode—I never so lost a Sunday—till I at last found my wife waiting for me at the tower outside Kerak, for the cavalcade had been seen from far.

"Now we have much work unpacking. . . I hope to rest on Saturday for Christmas. Mrs. L. has been sorely tried during my absence. Sick people still come, which is a good sign. I had to go to one before breakfast this cold morning."

In the closing message of the year from the Sitt to her Jerusalem friend she says :—

"The rain has come through our sponge-like roof and given us much trouble in moving things out of the wet. To one of my husband's temperament, it is indeed trying to have no companion, a limited library, and the people quite dissatisfied because of the lack of 'baksheesh'; but we hope time, by the goodwill of God, will teach them that we have *better gifts* for them.

"The want of seclusion has been a great trouble to us. We have really to turn the people out of our house of one room, in which everything has to be done. . . But experience teaches wonderful lessons. . . This morning Mr. Lethaby found this lovely white flower in his walk;



THE WADY ZERKA (JABBOK GORGE).

and on Sunday, as we enjoyed a quiet read away from these people in a cave beyond the gardens outside the town, these other flowers were in our path, and we picked them for *you*. Khowadja Ibrahim Khusus, the bearer of this letter, and his family are real friends to us. His mother is a dear soul, and his brother is the Greek schoolmaster."



"Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit! Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains."

ISAIAH xlii. 11.

CHAPTER III

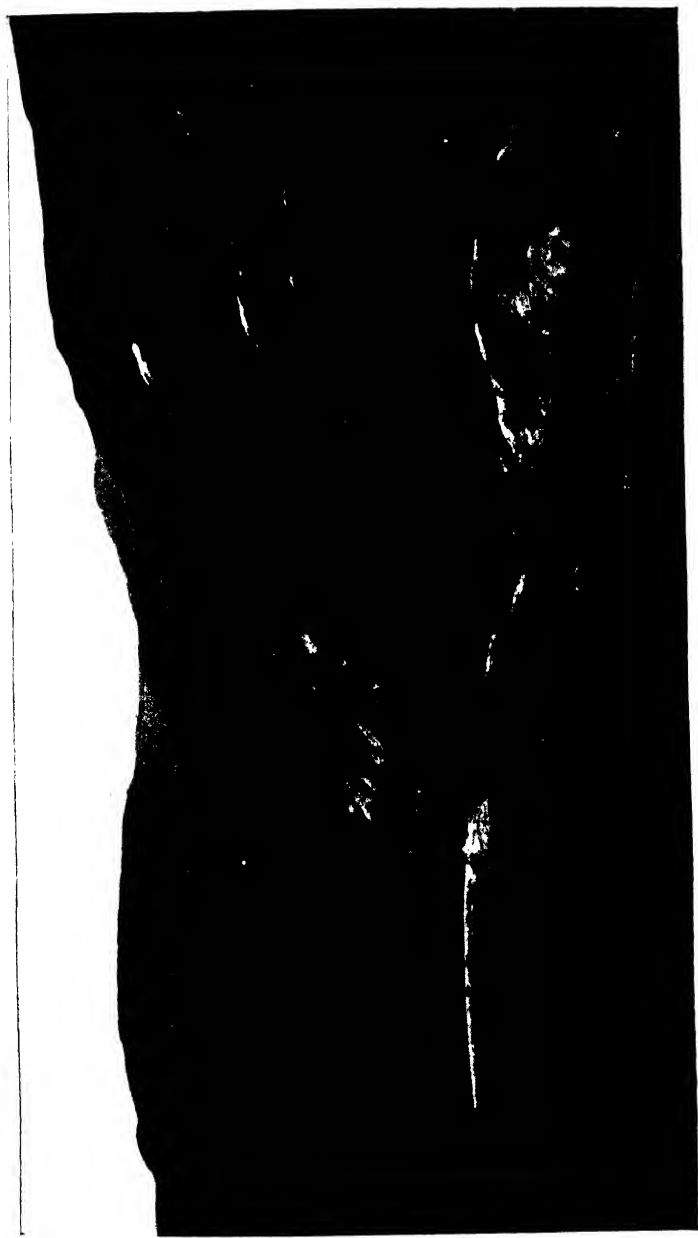
Manifold Work. The New Message.

1887

THE halo around Christmas and the New Year, so inspiring to Christian folk, and to those who live under Christian traditions and influences, was almost or altogether absent from the minds and hearts of the people who immediately surrounded this tiny Christian colony in Kerak. But this was the reason of their presence. They had come if, may be, they might sow some seeds of the Kingdom of Righteousness. The "love of Christ," which constrained them, had to be lived, and so taught. They realised that the original mandate, for them, was still in force, and though the old conditions of difficulty remained, yet the "Lo, I am with you always," was their strength.

The Sitt's letter to a friend in London explains some of their entanglements:—

"What is usually either an educational, or medical, or evangelizing, or training-home work here assumes all these characteristics.



THE WADY MOJIB (GORGE OF THE ARNON).

"It is no infrequent thing for us to be interrupted in our meals, or to have two or three sharers in what was intended only for ourselves; men, women and children come to us whose want is food far more than physic; and who above all need to be taught something of hygiene. Men and women will lie on the ground, or dunghill, and then ask liniment for their pains. They will ravenously eat half-cooked flesh and then call us up for help; and women, because they have a wound in the leg, will burn themselves elsewhere in two or three places to relieve it. But another patient, after he had received a second dose of rhubarb in one day, went and kissed the central portrait of the Bible Society's Almanac for this year—that of the Earl of Harrowby—in gratitude."

One of the early sorrows, after the settlement in Kerak, was the loss by death of the Greenthorne friend who had taken the mountain city so warmly to his heart.

That practical sympathy was continued during Mrs. B.'s brief further tenure of life. And afterwards, as long as the Kerak Mission was carried on, each member of the Greenthorne group, with the utmost tact and kindness, kept up a living interest. By no means the least appreciated, were the cheery epistolary messages full of fact and fun and fancy, which carried sheaves of sunshine for successive years to Moab and Aden from this glade among the Edgworth hills.

The Sitt continued to give pictures of daily life to Miss Barlee:—

"January 18th. We have been walking down the ravine, and climbing up the mountain side, then down to the lovely little river, an hour's walk or less away, with some of the lads and lasses of the best family here.

"The sunshine and warmth and greenery were delightful, as we had together bread, boiled eggs and watercress, and drank the beautiful clear water of the river. It was charming to watch a lovely Kingfisher catching his dinner, and to see that he had the good sense to fly away in time to escape being shot by the brother of my friend Sitt Adebah.

"How very thankful we were last Friday to receive my cloak and the very welcome letters and papers. Your gifts from the dear children I presented next day to four little friends. The handsome curtain I feel grateful for every day. It is just splendid to keep Mr. L.'s body from freezing, as the north-east wind blows through the stone and mud wall behind him.

"We have had much trouble with the men making the new door; four to work,—seeming to do so—with a score or so to look on and shout and smoke. We had to be uncivil enough to tell them it was impossible. When it was supposed to be finished, instead of a doorstep, there was a deep hole of three or four feet, with mud and stones. The rain still came through the roof like a colander, obliging us night and morning to remove books, clothes, &c. At last, Khowadja Isaac found he must do something besides make fair speeches—he is well able to do that—and they have now put more earth on the roof and we are less uncomfortable. . .

"I wish I could begin a mothers' meeting here, like yours; but am sure I am doing better to wait till some real helper comes who can manage the language better than I. Of course I use Arabic with these people, as only a few words of English are imperfectly understood even



KERAK FLAT HOUSETOPS.

by the bright lads whom Mr. Lethaby now teaches at our fireside daily.

"The day before the Greek Christmas Day, I was making a plum pudding and frying little cakes for the young folks on the morrow, when in came the great Sheikh Mohamed Mujelli himself. I apologised for being so busy, and spread a carpet for his sheikhship. He is dignified, but was amused to see me at work thus. However, he enjoyed a cake and cup of tea. It turned out that he had come for advice and relief. In the evening he sent his servant to fetch Mr. L. and more medicine; and since we hear that he is well. This does not look like unfriendliness, does it? And only last week, his nephew Sheikh Semaine, who stopped us when coming to Kerak, brought one of his own little girls of eight or nine years old and offered her to me to do my work if I would teach her. She was to sleep at a Christian house, near, but be with me in the day. Of course we consented, and the little gypsy came and ate one meal with us, but we have not seen her since. We may have her yet as our first Moslem girl pupil.

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February opened with severe testing both of the home and the work.

"On Feb. 1, 7 a.m." I.E.P. is told:

"I am writing to you instead of listening to a monotonous gabble, or a many-tongued '*kyrie eleison*,' or to its Arabic equivalent in the church hard by. Of the choir boys, I shall presently have five coming into this troglodyte abode of ours, with an Arab attitude and an English "g-o-o-d m-o-r-n-i-n-g, M-r-. L-e-t-h-a-b-y." We try to make our teaching as much a pastime as possible. It is my habit to keep back one—all in turn—for special instruction, and

the Lord's Prayer with English explanation. I am glad to say they do not tire of it.

"*Wednesday*. We went with the boys to the 'river' after lessons; they sang, shouted, fell, jumped—to order. This first day of February brought sunset while we were drinking tea with the first milk of the season.

"*Saturday*. I was implored by a man to go to his abode. The patient was in fearful pain and weakness, and had been so for ten days, while they had burnt his stomach* in half a dozen places to drive out the pain, and as an aperient. He is in less pain this morning but very weak. Calomel and julep were more effective in another case. . . But the crowds in each house—the smokers, the hubbub, the compliments, the general discomfort—beggar description. So does the wondrous diorama outside—the deep spoon-like hollow in which the Sea of Lot lies like glass, and Engedi, Bethlehem, Beit-Jala, and Jerusalem beyond!

"We have tried to relieve at least twenty cases this week, young and old, male and female; eyes, ears, stomach, feet, with the poor minimum of medicines we possess. We have been told that Mohamed Mujelli wishes for a real English Doctor and Hospital. If he is really honest, I hope some way may be found for such help.

"We don't want Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Andrew Clarke, but some medical brother willing to sacrifice English home and practice for Kerak life and usefulness.

"The rain on the books and clothes through the roof continues. These people have no idea of the damage a pint of water may do to clothing and literature. Then if we close our door we are in darkness."

*The Rev. H. H. Weir, at a recent meeting of the P.G. Society, called attention to an "oriental remedy" for indigestion which consists in *lighting a fire on the stomach of the patient*; an exaggerated form of the familiar mustard plaster.

Among gifts received for the Mission during 1887 was a cheque for £5 from Sir Arthur Cotton, of Dorking,—a very old friend of missions, who in a note to G.P., said :

“Nothing can be more to the purpose than such a work as this, and I expect that his example will be followed by numbers of English men and women ; indeed that a multitude of such workers will be sprinkled over the world before long.”

The Sitt had arranged for a visit to Jerusalem at the end of April ; and the start W.L. chronicles :

“The day began in the dark, for sleep was so fitful that I anticipated the day’s dawn, and got out on to the roof to find that a black cloud was beginning to sprinkle me. So back to the dreamy excursion with which the night had been occupied. With the first real glimmer we were both moving ; and about eight Mrs. L. *began* to say farewell. But you should see a real Arab valedictory ! . . In hot sunshine there was a scramble down several hundred feet, and a clamber up some two hundred to a fountain where the majority of the party were awaiting us. . . Then on to a sack of wheat and sundry packages Mrs. L. is lifted and soon comes off again. A second mount was better. . . Heat and hill compelled me to ascend while they ‘went up’ ; and when I reached the heights of Kerak, the far-off specks of a caravan were just disappearing over the opposite steeps like a ship at sea. . .

“I barely managed to get in unobserved before four of my pupils found me and were eager for the English hour ; these were followed by four others. Then came two little Moabite witches ; then bearers of wood and purchasers of the New Testament. My next duty was to

make a custard (!) for a poor Moslem girl, in the midst of which I was called by a neighbour to see her boy who has got a pain in his 'heart,'—from the throat to the legs is all 'heart.' In the intervals I managed to boil a saucepan of bread and milk and another of porridge, and to get through a chapter of Arabic Testament as usual. . . Among other kindly and unsolicited offers of help, was one to get me water by a woman who last week threw a testament at my head. So my way is smoothed and the prospect made more cheery."

"*May 11th.* I believe in purgatory, for I've been there for the last fortnight. . . I hope this penal celibacy is nearing a close. Among other visitants I have had interviews with two scorpions. A while ago I had a certain amount of curiosity respecting that creature. Now I have only fearsome loathing. 'Stung by the scorpion sin', has a fresh terror. . . Later on the boys dropped the carpet, exclaiming 'agrab'! (scorpion). What a mercy if all sin were 'destroyed' as *he* soon was; but it made me shiver!" . . .

"I wish you could see the place as I now see it day by day. The vivid green on the hill-sides, already changing to brown; preparation for harvest by out-goers and incomers; the thousands of sheep and cattle coming together into the city at eventide. The Babel is altogether beyond that of the Zoological Gardens at feeding-time; while in the noon-tide heat scarce a dog wags his tail.

"*14th.* Imagine my feelings when yesterday the caravan returned without Mrs. L. She is not well, and, of course, Jerusalem doctors and authorities are saying, 'don't' and 'wait.' . . I am undecided what to do."

He *waited*, and went on; his daily task furnishing more than abundant "room to deny" himself.

22nd June. Fifty years of age is too old to be 'gay' at walking the hospital! But I am thankful to God to be able to do a little toward healing the sorrows of some of these folk. . . But a greater worry is the intrusion of the old Sheikh's son, Isaac, flushed with arrack, who, with two friends, demand increased rent. . . But that, too, has passed for the present.

"Day after day has brought no sight or sound from Jerusalem.

[Communication was always fearfully uncertain, and was a source of much agony at each end.]

"You know of my wish to keep the Queen's Jubilee here with my boys. One of the long Greek *fasts* is in the way. . . On Saturday morning I went to the Khouri and asked his permission for my nine boys to eat meat with me, 'for the sake of the Queen's Jubilee!' He gave it, and I thought I was safe. Alas! after afternoon church comes the schoolmaster to say that the boys had all declined, and *he* had told the man not to kill the three fowls for me. It *was* galling! But I had my Sunday School, and did my best in other ways. . . As there is no law against bread and 'gomardine' (apricot paste) we got through. . . All the *little* children of this part I filled till they wanted no more. On the Monday afternoon, a woman made me thirty-six loaves, such as one reads of in the gospels, and I stewed all my remaining 'gomardine,' and then for two hours I was one with the thousands of the British Empire who were 'keeping Jubilee.' But it was a stiff job all to myself. They came and took, and ate and went! This was our Kerak Victorian Demonstration!

"Then I had my own frugal repast earlier than usual, and started to the valley for a quiet stroll and read. Oh, that you could have stretched with me in the shadows of the great rocks, heard the wild birds cry, seen the water

150 feet below, and the fringe of lovely oleanders, and, at the same time, sheep and cattle, and harvesters, at great and varying heights above. . . It is a wonderful land ! The barley is now all in, and most of the wheat is being trodden out even in these uplands. Morning and evening are delightfully cool, and last week were even chilly, while most days there is more or less of continuous breeze. Only yesterday did Ramadan fast come to an end, and to-day they may, and *do*, gorge.

“ I have a dozen enquiries every time I go out,—half in scoff, half in pity,—‘ where’s your wife ? ’ And the boys teach one another for my edification ‘ She—is—dead.’ Then some of the Mujelli family grin it at me in Arabic.

“ *12th July.* Last Thursday, while pounding syllables with my scholars, the old Sheikh came and growled—‘ Sitt coming ! ’ I feigned incredulity, but turned out scholars, locked the door, and in a quarter of an hour we had met.”

Illness had greatly delayed the return, and the journey itself had been tedious and eventful. The Sitt herself tells of it :—

“ *12th July.* On the whole, I travelled more easily on the good horse, with the attentions in rough places—and they were not a few—of the tall Moslem from Hebron, Ali Daouk, and the kind-hearted old Bethlehem man with him. . .

“ Being in the full swing of harvest, there were comers of all kinds at Khalil Sunaar’s at Medeba, from ‘ early morn till dewy eve,’ and on to midnight. They ranged from the miserably poor Bedawins begging bread and water, to the Jerusalem Turkish Effendi in search of a runaway Sheikh, who had taken off some hundreds of

medjidehs, and had been known to have stayed at K. S.'s for refreshment. Where was he now? No one knew. So the Effendi and his servant were entertained with coffee and talk, and near midnight he curled himself up on the divan on the other side of the house. I moved all my belongings to a farther corner, slept by snatches, and in the morning managed to wash and dress with reasonable comfort, although there was no bedroom for me. A cup of warm water with a little tea in it, and sopped bread, gave me a breakfast. . .

"By half-past five on Tuesday morning I was on the horse again; and early in the afternoon we turned into some tents near the edge of Mojib.* I went into the women's tent, and the mother of a host of boys, big and little, assuring me the bed was clean, welcomed me. I was really able to get some sleep; and one of the men managed to boil me some water and to make a little tea.

"Just before sunrise we started; and my good horse took well to the awful climbing up Mojib, even where the priest's horse refused to go. It was in places like climbing the pyramids on horseback! The scenery was, for the most part, wildly picturesque. The whole plain round Medeba and far beyond was one vast cornfield; with about four thousand camels, belonging to the Beni-Sakr tribe, who were threshing and carrying their corn. Many of the camels were white, and the herd included a lot of baby camels with their mothers. . .

"Once more, we slept in tents, about five hours from Kerak; and on Thursday morning reached the rocky height, managing to get quite near the castle and wall before anyone knew of my coming. Then one of our boys, Saleh, called out to greet me, telling me Mr. Lethaby was near." . .

* The gorge of the Arnon.

"My husband knew nothing whatever of my serious illness. . . The people are all apparently heartily glad to see me back. We find the old difficulty about the house. Men and boys, in their rough horseplay, running and jumping on the roof, which crumbles down mud and stones on us, whatever we are doing. I find the air of Kerak more health-giving than Jerusalem."

Mr. Lethaby, on the 2nd September, turns the kaleidoscope again :—

"At sunset to-day a man was brought to us with two fearful sword-cuts across the back, and upon our uneven floor we had to plaster and bandage and bind him up. God helped us, and we did it effectively. But he said he had no friends in Kerak. What could we do? We had to let this poor Moslem stay with us in our den for the night. Alas! for our senses! The next day he was able to walk about, and was ready to make himself too welcome. It was poor consolation to see him come next day with the long bandage on his arm, which Mrs. L. had taken pains to sew round his chest. He said he tore it off because of the irritation.

"I am doing battle with the nudity of these little Kerak lads—but not, at present, with much wholesome effect.

"On Sunday morning digging and stone-breaking was being proceeded with by the Moslem labourers in front of our door by Christian orders. I waited till I had the right ears to listen, and then preached my first open-air service in Kerak—one Lord—one Sabbath—for all. It was long enough, and I am thankful to say was effectual. Sulieman was told to cease, and it has not been repeated, although these Greek

Christians (!) carry on their own carpet-weaving and work of all sorts on Sunday. . .

"The last fortnight has been of the most worrying sort; not one night's rest have we had, because a carpet is being made by the women during the day, and all the men must stay up at night, drink coffee, and tramp to and fro across our roof to see that their fellow-citizens do not steal it.

"20th. We read in the *War Cry* and *All the World* that there is a Salvation Army man in Jerusalem now waiting to work as Providence may direct him. We think that possibly he might be willing to come on to us, where he could learn the language and work at his trade as a carpenter whilst he was helping us considerably with hand and head and heart. Could you" (Miss Barlee) "possibly find this good man—we do not know his name—either through the Bible Depôt, or the American friends? If he *can* come and *will* come, would you please give him any information about us that he may ask for and speed him on his way?"

This possible helper was, unfortunately as it seemed, never discovered, and there was real disappointment.

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The first anniversary of the coming to Kerak had come round, and "David" wrote to his "Jonathan":—

"Sept. 30th. Last night completed the year of our residence here. Only last Saturday my last letter to you went up the hill opposite Kerak; six hours afterwards one-half the company 'Timorous-like,' returned, saying there were Hameideh men in the way. On Monday evening, about nine o'clock, a big fire shone out on the

top of the hill northwards, and this was the preconcerted signal that the Hameideh were coming. After an hour's squabbling, about fifty rode out to exterminate the coming foe, and returned forty hours after as wise as they went out. . . . These things keep everybody in a perpetual worry; and these moonlight nights the old brags talk close to our den door or on our roof hour after hour. The 'latest intelligence' is that fifteen soldiers have been sent by the Sultan to chastise the Hameideh, and now the Keraki do not mind these Bedawins being thus cut up, though they must know that their own time will soon follow. . . .

"The death of Mr. Barlow gives us pause. . . . We look at the precariousness of our position. . . . It is only fair that you should know that the damp and smoke of this den last winter, the excess of work and conflict since, and the sleeplessness most nights, have much reduced my psychic force, and I hope you will all pray that it, as well as my spiritual strength, may be renewed. . . . The air and climate of the whole year seem to be not only bearable, but delightful for English folk. . . . Bodies are being helped, minds are being taught, Scriptures are being searched, souls are being pointed to Christ, and this ought to make us grateful.

"*Oct. 21st.* Sunday night was perhaps as bad as any we have passed. Our old Sheikh will have his coffee party on the roof next our den, and the passing over our roof, as the road to his, is something beyond endurance. All the evening and night the jumping and jabber were far beyond even Kerak average. To expostulate was to make fun for the Philistines.

"*24th.* This morning I felt gratitude at the sight of one of my patients—a Moslem boy. This is the eighth week of daily visits. His leg was at first a mass of sores, and now there is little to show of the former state of things.

Which weighs heavier—Hamed, the boy, or Semaine, the Sheikh? But it *is* trying work!

“27th. I have been badly bitten in the thigh by a ferocious dog, when I was overpersuaded to go and see a man who said he could not come to me. . . This is not a sedative.

“What a stir they are again working up on O. T. criticism, as though a child would be shaken in his belief, if he had any, as to Moses being Moses! Fancy the absurdity of any apology being supposed to be needed whilst the ‘land of Moab’ is a land, and Deuteronomy exists!”

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It was necessary, occasionally, for the Sitt to give an object-lesson in gallantry:—

“I was one day going across the open space behind our house and the Greek Church,” she says, “having a little child of four or five as my companion in a short walk, when I saw coming towards me a tall, handsome youth with his own attendant. I could tell from his head-gear that he was of the ruling family; but I took no notice, and passed on, holding my little companion’s hand. This youth must have known the only English-woman in the city. As he passed, I was startled by his seizing my arm, when I, swiftly, and without reflection, I suppose, with my other hand cuffed his princely ears, and exclaimed, ‘How dare you touch the Sitt Inglisi!’

“He looked astonished, and adjusted his ‘merar,’ and, with his boy attendant, went on into the city, presumably to tell of his unexpected and significant rebuke. But we have since met, and he has treated me with respect.

“I felt from the first, that, among so lawless a people, I must, alone or in company, show these men that I, and any ladies who might afterwards come to help us,

must be received with civility. I claimed this as a woman and an Englishwoman. As a rule, I am bound to say, we had courteous treatment from all, even when they robbed us."

After months of delay, our friends moved into new quarters, and Mr. Lethaby was able to write to I.E.P. from "Ebenezer" Cottage, Kerak, 18th November:—

"This is the name Mrs. L. has given to our second abode in this city, and you shall have the first letter from it on this, our fifth evening. . . . We have had the 20th chapter in Judges re-enacted. A woman has been 'besoweyed,' and the 'ahl' (clan) to which she belonged vowed that if the man were not given up, his house at Kat-rabba should be burnt with fire, and the whole place—an encampment in which he lived—should be cut up by the roots.

"The Mujellis, or part of them—the rulers—said 'Let it be settled by a fine'—of which a large part would pass through their own hands. But the clan cried for blood and fire. Thursday and Friday, then, were stirring days. On the evening of this latter, I had just finished attending to a grateful patient, and gloom of night was setting in, when the returning warriors brought back their wounded horses and men. To the most badly injured of the men I was entreated to go. Oh, horrors!—a wound over the right eye—a fearful one over and on the right ear! both from gunshot. Think of a printer's reader having to act as army surgeon under these circumstances. But, by God's mercy, this young man Onwad has been raised up from what seemed a fatal wound. The men had done just as they threatened—poured petroleum over the rascal's house—burnt it—and rooted up his fig trees.

“ This week the people who were tormenting the evil-doers and others at Kat-rabba have been tormenting me. So the crisis came for leaving our den and finding refuge here. . . Now we are comparatively ‘ in clover.’ ”

But a “ flitting ” in Kerak proved a much more exciting and serious business than is the usual experience of an Englishman and his wife at home during such an event. The Sitt tells the story to Miss Barlee :—

“ 25th. One week in this house with a forecourt and outhouse, has given us more rest than all the twelve-months in that den of the Madinats. But they were so enraged at our leaving, that we had to get our four best boy pupils and two young men to help us. So we went to and fro with packages and boxes all day on Tuesday week, but in the early morning of that day Mr. L. went from here, where we had only slept the one night, to get from the den just the provisions, kettle, &c., for breakfast. Our previous night here was only decided on late, owing to the rain coming on. As Mr. L. was returning for a third armful, while I was getting breakfast here, one of the Mujelli, who has been our torment before, came and pounced on him, threw him to the ground in the pit in front of the den Madinat, and knelt on his chest. With only one hand at liberty, it was not till almost exhausted with the weight on his chest that the rascal managed to wrench the key from Mr. L.’s injured hand. Two Moslem men and about six Christians (!), who had all come for medicine so early in the morning, stood or sat round and saw it all. Would you believe that the utmost they did was to say ‘ ha ! la ! ’—too much afraid of a Mujelli to touch one of them, even if he were nearly killing an Englishman. Think how we felt when he had

the key of our old house, and, of course, all that was in it! We knelt together here, and prayed for guidance. It was then raining, and it seemed the more urgent that we should get the key and remove all our goods. It has not rained since, fortunately. We went round and told old Abdullah and his '*ahl*' that we would stay in his house until the key was given up. So, after about an hour, the thief was brought and the key returned. On we went removing until the middle of the afternoon. Then this same David Mujelli, lying in wait, pounced on two of the boys who were following Mr. L., and stole two parcels of goods and a white basin from the young man carrying the china and glass. . . I was at the old house, and only knew of it after some minutes, when I rushed round to our next-door neighbour, Girius Madinat, who had previously stolen the horse, and met David Mujelli coming out of this house, where he had hidden the things. I stopped and accused him. Of course he denied. But he looked scared, though he threatened to strike me with a stick. I told him I feared no such fellow as he, and claimed the things he had stolen and hidden. 'Yes, for twenty medjidehs,' he replied. This was the sum he had demanded of Mr. L. after getting the key. I said, as did my husband, 'Not a single "para" to such a thief.' After an hour a bundle and part of another were brought to us as the whole. Unfortunately that nice cretonne curtain, your gift, was one of the things stolen. I am so sorry, after its usefulness to us all last winter that such a disaster has come. I pray yet that the thief may restore it. (He never did).

"Towards evening of that same day my husband was locking the door, with a packet of medicines in his hands, when I saw Madinat jump down from the roof and repeat the morning's theft of the key. . . He not only would not give it up, but demanded that the large box which he

thought contained my clothes should be sent round to his wife. We waited and prayed. The patients, of course, could not have medicine.

"I then went over to the Khouri and told him and one of the elder Mujelli that unless the key were returned we would acquaint the bishop and patriarch of Jerusalem that two of their members were thieves. . . In two or three hours, after a great deal of going to and fro, the door was opened. So ended *that* chapter.

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"Last Sunday was the first of the sixty we have spent here which has been at all a peaceful one. You cannot imagine the malignant, persistent worrying which we have had to endure from the Madinats and younger Mujellis. . . Only this afternoon I was amusing two of our boys by making a boat with paper sails—a new thing to them. They were watching it glide down the smooth water, when the thief and his friends came down—seven of them; on horseback. The Mujelli, having his long spear, came threatening Mr. L., who was sitting at the edge of the water reading. We stood together and showed no fear, although he continued demanding money of us, and his companions could scarcely keep him from violence.

"As they were riding away, David turned his horse swiftly and, with his long spear, made for us as we sat on a rock. One of the others rushed after him with a drawn sword and declared he should not molest us. But he stopped short of us a few inches only. This is not conducive to quietness of spirit, but the 'peace of God keeps' us in spite of it all.

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"One more trouble before the paper is filled; then I will try to give you a brighter side if possible. On coming into the house this afternoon I missed the ticking of my

watch. It was my mother's, with her dear name in it. It was gone. . . While I write we have a clue. . . The broken pieces are just brought to me—all the silver gone. Alas! for the cruel act.

"But the episode was not yet complete. Next morning the silver case and the glass came. The boy Joseph Maiai seems to have known how to open the door without the key. Sad to say, he is one who has for some weeks been learning English. . .

"There is no law or judge in Kerak to punish a wrong doer; though the Khouri Saleh of the Greek Church acts as a magistrate as far as he can. He has deposed the boy from reading in the Church as usual, while the teacher has dismissed him from the school and written on the schoolroom wall, 'Joseph Maiai, the son of Oudy, is a thief, and like Judas to his teacher and friend.'

"I went to the house of the boy and demanded from his mother the large picture of Queen Victoria we had given him, thinking he was honest, when even then, as we find, he had stolen pens from us. His mother and grandmother pleaded he was young, and it was not much to be angry about. . . But I took the picture down, telling them I could not let our good, honest Queen look down upon an unrepentant, dishonest boy."

The advantage of a better abode, and the facilities it gave for increased usefulness were greatly prized. But they longed both for more time and helpers.

"Somebody *must* come," he said. "We can now give accommodation and food. But I leave all in the Lord's hands. If we could do more, we would. To-day I totalled the number of cases already this second year. In eleven weeks we have made 591 visits, besides the daily instruction."

And the Sitt continues : “ Neither for love or money can a drop of milk be had, though there are hundreds of goats and sheep ; and the young kids could spare one little cup of milk if they knew how much good it would do the Khowadja ! He is not able to eat enough to help him much. But I am praying that, D.V., food convenient for us may be soon available. The grapes only lasted about a month, and we have had no green thing since,—even onions, the only vegetable here, are the same price as wheat. . .

“ You can realise how trying it is to have people demanding as a matter of course all they think their case calls for,—wishing me, for instance, to go five and seven times a day to see a baby or woman. . . One wants to be gentle and sweet all the time, but except one gives an object lesson every hour of the day, they smile and salaam, and do or leave undone the very thing that may kill the patient.

“ It is a real pleasure in the evening to close the door, light our lamp, and sit down for a read. This we can do in this house, and with a little earthen native stove with charcoal, it is quite comfortable for Kerak.”

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And now Christmas was once more on the horizon :—

“ The supplies we sent for three months ago have as yet made no sign, and it will be a puzzle how to keep Christmas. . . But I fancy you would almost give up your festal fare for a sight of the Holy City and Bethlehem as we can see them. We are able to see the light from the new lofty tower on the top of Olivet—eighty miles away—the air is so clear.

“ After a spell of three days’ rain, we have now lovely sunshine, bracing air, and plenty of ozone. But I cannot

work among the girls and women as I desire until I have a helper."

As the year closed, Mr. Lethaby rendered his account to those who were so cheerfully supplying means for the continuance of this Moab Mission :—

"If yours were an archæological paper much would have to be written about the history and peculiarities of this wondrous old place ; but your readers prefer to know first about souls and bodies. So let me say that, by God's blessing, we have been able to alleviate the pains of many hundreds, to heal the wounds of scores of men, women and children, and, I trust, to save not a few infant lives, though alas ! alas ! how many have not been saved ! And there are boys of whom I am as proud, in my small way, as Dr. Arnold or Mr. Osborn of their prodigies ; boys who, two years ago, did not know English from Kaffir, but can now read an English book, and to whom the steps of history and biography are not altogether strange ; while a sum in English currency would be put into piastres almost as quickly as you could do it yourself. And, thanks be to God, that is not all ; scores of boys and girls now prize their New Testament who never before had seen one—a Testament which they have *purchased*, be it remembered. On a feast day, when no work is being done, you may see a dozen human beings lying on the ground, and one reading to them out of a large Bible, also purchased, generally by barter. On Sunday morning my wife has her Sunday School of girls ; and following afternoon prayers I have round me as cute a lot of boys as any city arabs you can show, reading through Deuteronomy, repeating the '*Te Deum*,' going over and over the Commandments

for the day, and even trying at hymns and tunes. You ask me for fruit? I point to these ears of corn ripening in Moab harvest fields; and I thank God and take courage, whilst trusting that my case is made out, and I may fairly ask for help.

“And first, last, and midst, please give us your best prayers—you in your closets, and prayer-meetings, and social circles, you prevailing Israels—please ask that when one of the Mujelli sheikhs or slaves wishes to annoy, he may be restrained from above; and that when we are tempted from below to hasty words, or desponding thoughts, or unwise deeds, we may have the ‘kind, upbraiding glance,’ or the ‘why are ye fearful?’, with the ‘wisdom from above’; and that somehow there may come a Pentecost of souls, and that soon. Then, having put in the principal piers in prayer, please finish the building as God would have you.”

The Moab fund closed with a total contribution for the year 1887, of £93 11s. od.



"Were the Arabs Christians, we could have good hope of their success from their indomitable perseverance. But, alas! Arabia has been neglected by the Church of Christ, and, to-day, where we might look for invaluable missionaries of the Gospel, we find only fanaticism for a false faith."

MACKAY'S LIFE BY HIS SISTER.

CHAPTER IV

The Anchor of Hope. 1888

IF the Lethabys did not enter on the New Year jubilantly, they were certainly not dejected, and continued buoyantly brave amid long-drawn-out discouragements.

"These Christmas days have been a weary time in many respects," he tells I.E.P. on the 6th January. "Mohamed Mujelli has put an interdict on any journey to Jerusalem. . . The vagabond sheikh who encountered us on our entrance here, had taken the whole consignment which Miss B. had sent us—soap—letters—papers—all. God has given us back letters and papers, and a small tin of beef, which the villain thought was a tin of medicine—the rest has gone.

"During our waiting time we have fallen back on some of our friends' former letters—1883 and onwards; and they were like old Ebenezers. God only knows how they were the *encouraging* antidote to frequent *discouragements*. . . The death of Sir Wm. McA. is startling and impressive, the more so on account of the Jerusalem interview."

How precious was the batch of New Year's greetings; and from those who *understood*, too!

On the 7th, from I.E.P.—“How long did Judson and Martyn labour without result? Yet such work is never lost. God help us. We all hang upon Him as an infant on the mother.”

From R.H.W., 12th.—“In spite of many heart-disturbing difficulties, you have the great satisfaction of being free from the arbitrary and vexatious interference of the Turkish Government. Throughout the empire, colportage is being stopped on one and another frivolous plea. Mr. Hall's man was arrested and sent to Damascus, and Yusuf Nurrawi is in prison at Jerusalem for visiting Moslem villages in Jebil Khalil.”

From Rev. W. Arthur.—“I trust that this daring advance will be made the foundation of a work which will be the mother of many churches. . . My own experience leads me to a strong belief that when Mission work is mixed with any pecuniary benefit to adherents, its spiritual efficiency comes to an end. Whereas if we give ‘neither silver nor gold, but such as we have,’ then will the unsearchable riches of Christ generate riches of every other kind.”

Both experience and service continued much chequered; Feb. 2nd, W.L. writes:—

“This afternoon, by special request, I went up to the very apex of the city, close to the oldest castle, to see a man who was too ill to come out. It was, as usual, a sad, smoky scene within. But the views and surroundings are really amazing, and I do not believe that Stanley or Livingstone or Gordon ever had more wonderful sights than these. The summit of Kerak must be nearly a hundred feet higher than the church and our own

residence. And all the various roads down the surrounding hills are visible, with the passing pedestrians and the beasts laden with wood or 'sajar' (heath grass) for the city. . . .

"The first piece of news we heard this morning, was the seizure a few miles off, by the Hameideh Arabs, of 200 sheep belonging to the Greek priest. He had helped us, and in the night had started off to recapture and release his son, who had fallen into their hands, and then appeal to the Patriarch in Jerusalem.

"I am thankful that *our Patriarch* can be interviewed without going up to El Khuds."

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On the ninth of February Mrs. Wiseman was able to assure the Sitt :—"You have not been forgotten. Now at last, I am thankful to say, I have sent £30, from the Women's Auxiliary, to secure the services of a helper for you. . . . I feel sure if we have the money you will be helped again. May God bless and prosper you." And from G.P. came a gladdening note in the same sunny strain :—"I am glad to say I had money enough of yours to pay for the goods we have just sent you ; and some of it came, most providentially, just on the day it was needed."

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To the Italian R.C. Latin priest in Kerak, on the 14th March, Lethaby sent a kindly little French note of sympathy. The poor man had been worn out with the wickedness of the Mujellis, and was nearly as emaciated as the writer himself. He had been robbed and taken from the city, and his cup of

distress had become overfull. So these two workers had a kinship of buffeting. The Sitt later on had the pleasure of administering to the good man's comfort as they journeyed together towards Jerusalem.

It was now necessary for one of the Anglo-Kerakians to go again to El Khuds to enquire about the contemplated assistant, and for other pressing matters. . . The Sitt stayed by the stuff, and the husband wrote:—

“31st. Before I got out of sight of Kerak two of our tormentors rode up to stop me; and even after I was mounted jeered malevolently. . . In Mojib were a good number of cuckoos, but the place is as terrible as ever. . . In some Moslem tents a poor sick man claimed a visit, before we entered on the fatiguing wadies which brought us on to Medeba. It was a joy indeed to reach Jericho by sunset on Monday; although they would not, without much ado, give us tea at the Russian woman's house. But I afterwards walked on to the Apostle's Fountain, and with a good rest and a meal of bread and raisins, was enheartened to pursue my way. I rejoiced not a little to find myself between nine and ten on Tuesday morning in Jerusalem.

“Miss B. is in Nazareth. The bill of lading of the box sent from London is here, but of the case itself I can at present hear nothing. My first experience of a *bed* for sixteen months was eminently satisfactory.”

He proposed to go to Beirût, calling on his return by steamer at Haifa, perchance to meet

Miss B. The hope of reinforcement he kept to the front in all these movements.

The Sitt was able on the whole to report favourably :—

“On Easter Sunday I had a good time with the sixteen girls and the usual boys afterward. They came early to say ‘The Lord is risen: Alleluia!’ On Monday I frightened them rather with a peep at an enormous flea in the microscope.

“M.M. is staying somewhere close by, so I keep indoors. . . Do not fear for us. There is now a famine of all flesh and fowl, but Ibrahim brought me some fish yesterday; quite a treat. Our neighbour and her children, with the girl Cuthra, sleep in their porch, with a curtain up so as to hear and see ‘dishiemen.’ The dogs, too, seem to think we are a set of poor defenceless women and children, for they keep up a lively chorus of barking most of the night. I am looking for your sun-burnt visage to appear at our gate, which gives me some trouble to keep.

“*9th.* Our landlord is full of desire that Saleem should go to Khuds to study, and hopes he will be a credit to our work when he gets to the big school. . . I made him and Oudy a paper kite, tail and all, on Friday. There was much excitement among the boys. The first kite in Kerak! . . I have not been away further than the corner of Jacob Sunaar’s since you left.”

A fresh taste of civilization was a heavenly benizen to the man of Kerak. He wrote from Beirût to I.E.P. :—

“*April 7th.* Once again by the goodness of God I find myself in the enjoyment of the comforts of civilized

life, and sit at a table in a house at Beirût, one of the pleasantest abodes on the face of the earth. I came to Jerusalem because of the grant for a helper from the Ladies' Association, and in the expectation of a box which I wish to save from our Keraki marauders.

"I called on 'Sister Charlotte,' among others, who told me of a young woman whom I have seen at Jaffa. She seems very likely for us. I told her of difficulties and danger—and impressed upon her not to think of it for salary, but for Christ. I see her again on my return.

"10th. I was much cheered on Sunday by hearing children of Moslem parents (in Miss Taylor's School, Beirût) singing in Arabic and English some of our most evangelical songs, and understanding them. Their knowledge of Scripture, too, is wonderful. . . The American Mission Press have made me a grant of £2 worth of Arabic books. I hope I may get them safely through the terrors of the 'middle passage' to Kerak, then they will do a grand work. . . At Miss Thompson's Syrian Schools I had the privilege of once more opening my lips aloud in English to the girls and young women students. . . To-day I expect to say good-bye to this charming little 'Home of Rest,' and get back by the Arabian boat to Jaffa, and thence to Kerak. Except that Mrs. L. is there, Kerak is as different from Beirût as Portland Prison is from Hawarden Castle. . . I can only very feebly express what a blessed time this has been to me. . .

"I have had four or more Easters in Jerusalem, but never knew one so good as this—there is a more spiritual tone in all the services. . . Yet on Good Friday morning I felt like bursting: flags all half-mast, because 1,854 years ago *He* died; and yet think of Calvary as the site of a merry-go-round, and the place in possession of the ignorant and degraded Turk! The very sound of the

Gospel as read by the officiator in Christ Church was jarred and hidden by the shriek from a neighbouring minaret of the Moslem Muezzin.

"Jerusalem is wonderfully changing from year to year. . . Mr. Doughty, the author of 'Arabia Deserta,' is now sitting at this table. We have compared notes with mutual benefit. Shall I ever go farther still with the first instalment of Scripture into fanatical Moslem-land?

"18th. The return to Jaffa was most tempestuous. Miss B. was greatly surprised to see me when she came on the boat at Haifa. . . E.D. is ready to join me any day.

"Last Thursday morning," the Sitt tells from her mountain fastness, "just as I had begun my breakfast, Ibrahim Nazareth came to say that Sitt Nazar was going, with himself and Assad, to the 'bustan' (garden) above Sunaar Mill, on the other side the river—would I like to go? . . . We had a most enjoyable day. They gathered green stuff for eating; while Ibrahim was on the look out for a pigeon for me. . . He managed to kill a 'shunaar'—a sort of red-legged partridge, which was a greater prize still. The plump, tasty bird I enjoyed for two days.

"On Friday night the rain came down as from a 'spout,' and I had to drag all our things to the 'evening room' part, and bale out ever so much; at last I was obliged to give it up and let it come, 'mid thunder and lightning and wind. The water ran across the room to our bed-place, so all things had to be put up in the 'mustaba'—and there by snatches I slept.

"We found that the mice had made quite a tunnel through the flat roof; and so they gave me a small Niagara. . . Salim, after a great deal of reminding, has put our door fastening right. My appetite is not

good—the same food eaten alone does not taste so nice as when you are here. How is that ? ”

As to the husband, he says on the 23rd :—

“ I shall not be able to bring one-half of what I want for the children, for you, for all. . . At length the box and hamper have come, but all turned topsy-turvy. Oh, those Turks at Jaffa ! The repacking was serious. . . Friday was a ‘ Mission Day.’ Mr. S. had to do it all, and did it well. . . Colonel B. came across to my room. We had a talk, and he showed me what he thought by the gift of two napoleons ; and yesterday morning after church got me to the Prussian Hospice to dine as his guest. I cannot yet prophesy the date or manner of return.”

He was detained some while waiting for a convoy. There was good hope of the suitability of the young person he had secured ; and he was further impressed with the desirability of making a base for his work in Jerusalem. His idea was a centre and training home ; but it was the God-called *person* he wanted to see most.

On the 4th of May he wrote :—

“ Close to the Jaffa gate there came up to me the aged father of the boy we helped years ago at a village near. He fell on my neck and kissed me in native fashion. Poor old man ! I hope his son, who took my wife and me to Medeba, may now do the same for our new teacher and myself.

“ To-day is Good Friday for the Eastern churches. Mixed with grateful Moslems, grotesque Greek religionists and Shylock Jews, was a dancing bear, and a performing monkey a few minutes after. . . You may know the

width of David Street—the High Street of Jerusalem—when I tell you that the soldiers coming up this afternoon four abreast completely stopped the way.

“12th. I have paid P. 133 for an animal which is supposed on Monday next to take myself and sundry packages to Jericho, *en route* to the Bedawin land, in company with the ladies of Kerak, who have honoured Jerusalem with their presence. I have purchased a donkey for E.D., who will, I hope, make good proof of her riding as well as her scholastic prowess. Pray for us yet more and more that our faith fail not.”

The journey was not accomplished without much travail. When within two hours of their destination, one of the Mujellis and an armed slave attacked Mr. Lethaby, forcing away his mule and all it carried, only to be ransomed by Isa Sunaar's intervention, for four napoleons. This event, like the rest, soon became only a memory, and the Sitt almost immediately is saying, “Every day we are as busy as can be, and on Fridays, now, we have the beginnings of a Mothers' Meeting. Some of them say that we must be Moslems, or we should not want to work so much for them. You will pray that this meeting and the school, may be a blessing.

The C.M.S. had contemplated sending an agent to Kerak, but on the 5th June the following resolution was passed :—

“That, inasmuch as the Committee have learned that there is a probability of Mr. Lethaby's work at Kerak,

being continued for some years at least, and of his being immediately joined by other Christian workers, they do not think it would be wise for them to open a C.M.S. station there at present."

Relations with the Mujelli did not improve: their insolent brazen-faced robbery continued. The Sitt relates another exciting incident:—

"30th. Our good donkey, which Jacob was bringing to Khuds, has only come back to be stolen from me by the brother of S'man Mujelli in the street not far from our house. Jacob had broken the chain attached to the rope in using the poor animal, and I saw the donkey break away and run out of the yard. I ran after it, calling to the Muallim Sunaar to catch it for me. He was afraid to follow thirty yards from his own house into the Moslem quarter, but saw Sulieman Mujelli catch the donkey and lock it up in his house. It was all done so quickly, before I could get round the corner to Beit Sunaar's; and, being noon, no one was in sight, but the thief, coming to me in a minute, demanded two lire. When Mr. L. and the boys came up, the thief tried to stab him. In a few minutes there was a crowd of Moslems and Christians around us, not one of whom dared to call the man a thief, or go with us to rescue the poor animal. This was last Thursday, and he is still in their hands. We cannot let things go on like this, as if baksheesh is given, it means still larger demands and threats from all the Mujellis. One of the Sheikhs stole 200 sheep from the Hallassas last week; and Mohamed, the head Sheikh, makes no sign of redress. All this brings great uncertainty and trouble. The Christian heads of families are glad, for the sake of peace, to condone these offences. Thus the brigands go on in

their wickedness, as they fear neither God nor man ; and a man's life to them is not of as much value as a horse or a good donkey, such as ours. We are wanting to see Mohamed, to have the thing settled, but all are afraid to help, as they have so much of their own to lose. We are praying hourly that God may restore the poor creature to us, as he is needful for our work and welfare.

“The school for Moslem children still goes on. The bright little fellows have come long enough now to spell short words, and to know the figures. Many came at first, and several names are entered, but the harvest work brings a lot of labour, and they do not come regularly at present, except the four whose parents bring them, and desire that they should be well taught. This is E.'s principal work, as I have even more to do than before she came. At the Mothers' Meeting on Friday, she is a help, though the women understand my Keraki Arabic very well. We have given E. our only available mustaba for her own room. With a curtain, it is as private as we can make it, and we have, in every way, endeavoured to make her life in Kerak as comfortable as can be. . . Last week, this quarter of the city was astir with a wedding at the Uminda house,—Isa Adalli, brother of one of our boys learning English, to Katrina, who used to help me in household duties. I went to the wedding in the church, and to the house. . . I cannot now tell you all the curious customs,—their fine dresses, &c., from Damascus, the seven days' fantasia, &c. It must have cost a lot of money.

“Meanwhile, about four hours from here, there was sheep-stealing and fighting, several poor men being wounded, and two or three killed. It is worth while to pay taxes to have something like law and safety. We pray God to bring righteousness and peace to this land soon. Surely, where for so many centuries the Greek

Church has kept a lamp for Christ, though dimmed by the smoke of superstition, and, at the worst times, has read and kept the New Testament to the front, there will yet come *clearer* light to these people, I pray it may.

“August 6th. I feel so much for the poor Empress Victoria in her great sorrow. . . We knew nothing of the course of events since Mr. L. left Khuds, until your letter.

“I must tell you that God answered our prayers, and in a strange way restored to us our good donkey. Our landlord rode over to the tents, and, in his own name, got him for us. We would not give any money to do so. It would have to be repeated every week if we began that. When the poor beast gets to Khuds, I hope you or Mr. Eoll will buy him, as we must never keep anything in Kerak of that sort. Even an hour or two ago the thief came to our gate, and we are in constant dread of a scene, as the M.’s and their big black slave are all over the place. . . Every day brings new proof of our need of Divine care; so we trust and sing, ‘A safe stronghold our God is still.’ ”

Mr. Lethaby thought it well to keep the English Consul at Jerusalem informed of current events, and received this reply:—“I have to let you know that persons engaged in mission work, and British subjects in general, must be very cautious how they venture into the outlying districts of this Province, where they cannot receive the protection of the law. I must therefore warn you that if you establish yourself at Kerak, on the borders of the desert, and where the authorities of the country decline to hold themselves responsible

for enforcing the law, you will have to do so at your own risk."

Irritants were always plentiful :—

" 'It would not do,' says the Missioner, on the 6th September, to begin with, 'Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war!' and yet I never felt more disposed to do so. Here is a letter sent off 20th July, and brought back after it had gone but two days on the road. We are in absolute ignorance of all news for the past four months—except that we regret to hear that the second Emperor of Germany has followed the first. . . Our medicine stock is running low :—twenty-five doses a day, are rapidly exhausting it. . . I killed a scorpion last night, some inches in length, crawling up the bed place. But the greatest heat will soon have passed."

The following recount of one day's programme, domestic and missionary, may stand for many more :—

"*Sept. 8th.* . . To-day's work will give you some idea of the usual routine, varied by the constant interjection of accidents—crushed feet or fingers, or sword-cut head of some Keraki giant—to be attended to. Before sunrise we were up and beds aired outside, folded, and put away. The girl came as usual to sweep and bring a pail of clean water for drinking. The first thing, prayers and reading of Scriptures; then, before we can swallow our bread and eggs and tea, the sick people are sitting at the gate, or peeping over. So I begin to dress

wounds and mix medicines with Mr. L.'s help, while he is teaching four Arab boys to write English. Meantime I have to get a fire to burn outside the door in the same place as I attend to the sick; and between whiles wash my hands a score of times, while dressing a fowl for dinner. E. is at her little school in the same enclosure, five Moslem boys seated on a mat around her. Then comes a woman entreating me to go to a relative—'nearly dead,' she says. I leave all and go round right into the heart of the city, give the needful help, and return to find the fowl cooked during my absence. Then other patients are seen, and the children dismissed for their midday meal. . . We take ours, but do not stop for any siesta after. . . Mr. L. is teaching English to two Arabs sitting down the other side of the box on which I write. After these two are dismissed four others come. Then a little respite from scholars, but, as it is Saturday, some of the bad cases come a second time to be doctored. If I take a rest it is while these four boys are learning English in the same place—call it room or house. It is often that one cannot sleep well at night. So you will see all these things mean weariness. . . Then, no letter but yours, *via* Salt—that was a gleam of light from the outside. . .

"Last week we had a chance, at half an hour's notice, to send off the poor donkey by a Bethlehem man who had come and was returning by the Ghor *via* Hebron. Although he was a stranger, we ventured to give the animal into his care. . . We are sincerely glad to get the creature away from the Mujellis. . . One has to have the fan in hand, for bees and flies are a plague. Indeed we keep a little fire going for the smoke to send them off. Last night we killed an awful-looking scorpion, going into Mr. L.'s books and papers. . . This is about the twelfth we have killed from four to six inches

long. Mice are abundant, and snakes are seen and heard in and outside these houses. We need strong nerves for these shocks."

The Sitt, writing on Monday morning, 1st October, "long before sunrise," has still terrors to record:—

"There was a riot last Tuesday—hundreds of men and boys hurling great stones at each other. The women were like demons, tearing the stones from the graveyard adjoining our house to supply their men with weapons. It is a great mercy that no swords or guns were used; but there was an awful number of broken heads and injured limbs. We find the need of more help; and if Providence should send some good brother to Khuds for our work, I trust he may be able to come on without delay. . . .

"If you have any scraps of cotton rags for the hundreds of wounds I have to dress in the course of a month, please fill up the corners in packing. The broken heads and limbs from last week's riot, as well as the every-day needs, take all my old pieces. . . . I am so glad the good donkey—'Joe,' we called him—got safely to you. . . . The tins of soup, etc., are so good."

The Rev. H. Sykes (C.M.S.), Ramoth Gilead (Es Salt), was a constant and sympathetic friend. He wrote, 11th October:—"I trust that brighter and better days are near at hand. . . . At present the outlook could not be much darker. Yet I cannot help thinking 'that the set time to favour Zion' is nearly come . . . and that the burden

and reproach of Moab will be rolled away, and that you will be a sharer in the Master's glory."

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A fling at Lethaby's handwriting—he knew it was well-deserved—helps to relax once more the muscles of the good man's face: "You must look to receiving a doctor's bill. I may have to consult him on the questions of sight and brain, which have both been severely tried in attempting to read your letter. After sundry fruitless efforts we have given it up. You have crossed the writing, and have used foreign paper, and it is, of course, well-nigh indecipherable. . . .

"We have made another great attack with partial success; and our discoveries call forth our warmest sympathy for you both, in your critical condition."

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The perpetual human torments in the mountain-city did not suffer their own people or the Missioners to forget their existence.

"Only last week," says the Sitt, "some of them molested the Latin priest, Alexander, in his house, three minutes' walk from ours, and ordered him to pack up and go unless he gave them the money they wanted. They prevented him ringing his bell for service one morning. Now he has really gone on to Jerusalem to state his case. All such work as this *must* soon bring a change in the ruling of Kerak.

"16th. While, of course," says W.L., "I am house priest-in-ordinary, the Sitt, on our Wednesday and Sunday evenings, takes all your tablets and spreads them before

the Lord Solomon and Hezekiah-wise. . . This morning we had a fourth at Scripture-reading, the grandson of the ruling Sheikh, Abd-el-Kader, who is friendly. I could not postpone reading till our patients came in, so asked him to listen, and E.D. read over again for him, in Arabic, the 15th Psalm, which seemed most appropriate. The seed was sown—what the ground is remains to be seen. . . Last week I was two or three days in attendance on Mohamed Mujelli; but it is not always pleasant work.”

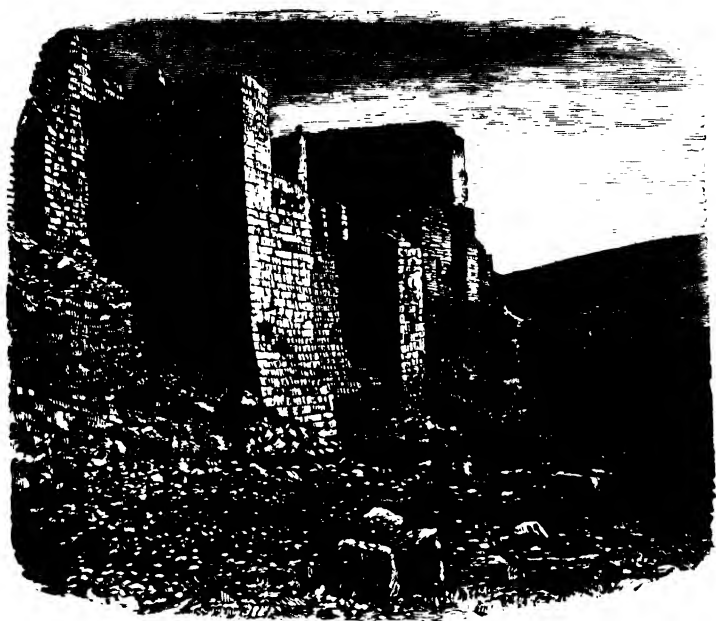
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The father, at Sidmouth, died on the 8th November. The characterization of this good man shows whence the son derived some of his finest points: “Conscience, truth, and duty were his watchwords. He clung to them as the guiding star of his long and useful life. . . His self-abnegation, his unflagging industry, his undying hatred of shams and hypocrisies, his resolute determination to shrink from no duty imposed upon him, pointed him out as the poet’s ideal of the true Christian :—

‘The plain, good man whose actions teach
More virtues than a sect can preach. ’ ”

The outstanding incident of November in Kerak was the death of the ruling Sheikh.

“One chief event has happened,” the Sitt narrates, “amid the many surprises of this turbulent city—that is the death of Mohamed Mujelli—who gave Mr. L. permission to come to Kerak. He had been ailing somewhat for



KERAK CASTLE WALLS.

some weeks from an old complaint for which he had medicine several times from us and found relief. We knew nothing of this last illness, as he was out in his tents at Rabbah, two or three hours from here. But it seems that he sent two of his slaves into Khuds to the Greek Patriarch for medicine, and when the men returned he was too far gone, they say, to benefit. Rumour came of his death, but we and others thought it was report only; indeed some were just telling me it was a 'kethib' and M.M. was better. So my husband suggested going out with medicines to see if he could give relief as before, when the scene at the top of the mountain road leading into Kerak gave unmistakable signs of the fact that the Sheikh was dead. Mr. L. and I went with Mualmat Adebah, and the capable portion of all Kerak, to see the burial of the ruler so much and so long feared.

"It was impressive to watch the signs of grief and respectful mourning by Moslem and Christian alike. There must have been a hundred and fifty horsemen, some few being from the Sunaar's and other families. The majority were Mujelli's sons and kindred. The body was carried on a litter, his horse being led behind. The descent from opposite Kerak down into the Wady—deeper than the Kidron from Olivet—and then an equal climb into the city, gave time for thousands to gather for the sight. The Moslem women cried and howled and threw dust over their heads, and saluted the sons with a pathetic cry of sympathy. The burial took place just outside the great ruined Castle at the top of the principal street (!) of Kerak.

"Abd-el-Kader, Mohamed's own father, is buried there, and by his side was a newly dug grave within the stone enclosure where the body of Mohamed Mujelli was laid on Wednesday. There was quite a ceremony of washing the corpse beneath an old archway close to the Castle;

and it was wrapped in new Manchester calico from a Christian shop. Then followed a rather lengthy performance of Moslem prayers and bowings by the Hebron men who were his personal attendants. Before the actual interment, a curious scene was witnessed, which meant a great deal for the successor to the Sheikhdome, Saleh, son of Mohamed. He, Sheikh Saleh, was saluted by all the differing and different members of the family as the true successor. As he sat at the head of the grave holding between his knees the little brother of ten or twelve years old, several names were called out, nearly all being members of the Sunaar family. They came forward one by one and touched the body and uttered certain words. We found afterwards that this was an acquittal of all debts due from the Sheikh to them. After the burial, which had taken all the morning to perform, the family of the Mujelli came to the Sunaar's and the Khusus' homes to eat the funeral bake meats, and to rest. It appeared that the new Sheikh, the two wives of the deceased, and his daughter, to whom I went and spoke at the funeral, had been much worn, and had not eaten for three days. The Sunaar women were very kind to them. The Mujelli family will surely be the friends of the Christians in Kerak.

"I had, as a great favour, been asked by the eldest daughter of M. M. to make her and her sister a jacket each, of some cloth they brought me. I have since finished them, and they are wonderfully pleased with their 'city-made' garments! They gave me as pattern a pale blue cloth garment of beautiful quality, embroidered with silk, from Damascus. They cannot themselves cut or sew."

Dr. Maxwell, who had sent frequent and generous medical supplies, wrote :—

“We are all of us interested in your field, in your curious medley of people, and most of all in yourselves and your work for the Kingdom of Christ. . . I hope you won't weary to press your claims on us and on the multitudes in the Mother Country who love the Lord, but yet have oftentimes a very deaf ear to the cries of His servants. . . We pray you to be of good heart, in the might and wisdom and love of your Master.”

The aged widow of the Rev. W. M. Bunting says, on the 23rd November :—

I have to-day forwarded a cheque to Mr. P. with a promise that should my life be spared a while longer—for I am midway between 81 and 82—I will become a regular subscriber to the Mission.”

To which I.E.P. adds :—

“Above the blue heavens God's eye looks down, and Eternal love behind it. Should we not take courage? Spurgeon says that however low we sink the everlasting arms are still *underneath* !”

There was often a strange medley of the orient and the occident in the domestic and semi-public life of the Kerak Mission House. W.L. wrote :—

“Christians, I suppose, should never ‘chew the bitter cud of discontent,’ but there is at least a temptation to taste the rind of that unpleasant fruit, for we increasingly feel the need and desirableness of a helper. . . .

“The other night Sheikh Saleh's slave came into our landlord's yard to say that his master wanted barley, and of course he had it. Yesterday about four o'clock the landlord himself told his wife that the Sheikh and his ‘*entourage*’ were to come for the night. Genesis over again. A sheep was soon lying on its back, with the sight

of the blood to quicken the appetite of the expected guests. The old man came into our house for the 'leben' which he still keeps here; *i.e.*, hardened '*semane*,' the fat of last year's cream, and the 'butter' of this land.

"Before very long, the Sheikh and five of his relatives appeared, among them the boy brother of whom mention was made in connection with the old Sheikh's funeral. Now fancy my having to do anything approaching a courtly reception; but this boy was a capital go-between. I got out our only real chair and carpet into our court schoolroom and waiting room, persuaded the Sheikh to sit in it, and expressed our best wishes, offering to present his respects to the English Consul at Jerusalem, which offer he very willingly accepted by saying he would put his seal to an Arabic letter to that effect. After a while he, of course, went into a more congenial seat on the carpet of our landlord's house, but his boy brother took the vacant chair, and only quitted it when the sun had set and he felt too cold to stay.

"He is perhaps ten or twelve years old; and you can suppose he felt at home by the remark, '*abui maat ant' abui*'—'My father is dead, you are my father. Of course we put a capital 'F' to the fatherly references.

"Then we went indoors, and had our usual reading and prayer, when I recognised the voice of the Sheikh's son, Abd-el-Kader, calling '*Khowadja*.' He had left the company and come in to sit with us. This he did for more than an hour as I showed him the large Arabic map of Syria on which the '*Mujelli*' are indicated. I told him something of nineteenth century politics, and endeavoured to show him the advantage of truth and goodness in such a city and skeikhdом as Kerak. . . He willingly joined us at our table and told his father he had eaten with the *Khowadja*. . .

"This morning we managed the Arabic letter to the

Consul, and one of our boys read it with Arab dignity to the Sheikh, who then rubbed the cork of the ink bottle on the seal which he carried in his pouch. It is engraved with an Arabic monogram. . . .

"It is astonishing how clannish the city is. Almost all our scholars and patients come from a limited sphere, comparatively next door to us; though occasionally a Bedawin will come from quite a distance; and folks from 'up the city' are recommended by neighbours and friends."

The British Consul, acknowledging the Sheikh's letter, says, "I trust that Kerak has now entered upon a new era of security and peace, and that this will conduce to your own safety and comfort, and to that of future visitors. I enclose herewith my reply to Sheikh Saleh Mujelli, which please hand to him after perusal."

The Consul's hope was a vain one, as will be gathered from a memorandum written by the Sitt only a week later:—

"Events in this city have gone on much the same since Sheikh Mohamed's death. But the dreaded Hameideh Arabs who have caused two deaths at Medeba are themselves the sufferers now. We hear that two Keraki have quite recently gone out and killed an important Sheikh of theirs. This, added to the cool murder of an innocent Hameideh man down at the mill near the city, will bring reprisals ere long.

"Meanwhile, we are in a besieged city. All are afraid to go to Jerusalem. If any can muster courage enough they will go by way of the Ghor, and so Southward, instead of by Medeba.

"In our work with the Moslem children we get a

present reward in seeing half a score of those who a while ago knew nothing—they merely existed—read fairly well in the Scriptures, and know some of it by heart. They repeat perfectly the first Psalm, the first chapter of Genesis, and sundry hymns containing the Gospel in essence, which Mr. L. has written in Arabic for them. Other general knowledge they are also gaining, and will, we hope, if their parents allow them to remain, do themselves credit. On Sundays they come in the morning for a little service, in which the Commandments, with responses, and the Lord's Prayer are explained in a bright talk by Mr. L. with plenty of singing, and closing with a meal of bread and gomardine.

“Although our stock of extras is lessening, we are hoping to give our children a feast at Christmas, which will be a revelation to them. They are as good and merry a group as any in Kerak ; and now really most of them try to come looking clean and tidy, compared with their previous state, and they are not the poorest children. Beside the pies and cakes and chickens and figs and a few sweets still in reserve, we hope by the gift of a Scripture picture and bright card to those who have worked best, to mark the season as a joy to them. If a London toy-shop were nearer, they should each have something from it. But I have made a carriage for their usual play hour out of a sardine tin, and some empty cotton reels! E. has made a large blue cotton ball. These all give great delight, and are indeed a new-found pleasure to those who, a while ago, found their greatest fun in noisily beating each other and playing with dirt on a real dung heap.

“Our meeting for women and girls on Fridays varies, and at present is not flourishing as we would like. . . I must get increasing hold of the language and talk and read with them. If you could sometimes be with me

here and there in scenes of death or sickness in their homes, you would value the respectful attention of those who know us best. But it is painful, of course, to feel how very degraded the minds of some of these Moslem women are. But however low, they always listen to a word about God, and take delightfully to the Lord's Prayer. So there is ground to work upon. . . Pray that the blessed Holy Spirit may open some hearts to receive the truth in the love of it, and that we may be helped to speak in such a way as to win them for Christ."

The climatic eccentricities of Moab were not infrequently sources of great difficulty and trial; and the extremely rude domestic architecture added to the stress of storm and tempest:—

"20th. These last twelve days," says W.L., "have been very trying: such a storm, they say, Kerak has never known. . . Continuous rains for days and nights. Then on Saturday, Sunday and Monday came a fearful snowstorm. In the evening a terrific wind arose, and we feared an old arch in our own outbuilding would fall before morning. It stood, however, but about midnight there was a fearful sound and clatter of falling timber and rubbish, and our throats were filled with dust as we lay in bed. . . With the first gleam of morning we found that our porch, about 10ft. long and 6ft. wide, had come down bodily, blocking up the court where patients stand, and two stout poles, like 'Jachin and Boaz,' rested against our door, preventing it from being crushed in. . . Elsewhere results have been terrible—deaths from exposure to the snow; whilst all over the city the old roofs have succumbed, people are living in their 'maksin' (grain holes), and babies are being born in the courts. . .

"We have all the Moslem children in the house, and the patients have to be cared for on the top of the ruins.

Fortunately the wind cleared up the many days' storm, and now we have beautiful sunshine. The poor creatures all over the city are wondering *how* they can rebuild these ruined dwellings. It has been a sad time of much sickness and some deaths.

"The men come to look, and promise to begin repairs *to-morrow*, and so on day by day. . . Then we are, unfortunately, obliged to take complete oversight of the Moslem School in addition to our own work."

During this year, 1888, death made many inroads into the Lethaby circle. The difficulties with E. had become a serious item, too. On the other hand, financial help had sensibly increased. A substantial grant had been received, through Dr. Waller, from the "Smithies" Legacy for free distribution of Bibles, Tracts, etc.; and the B. & F.B.S. continued its grant of Scriptures on easy terms. All this was further prompting to "thank God and take courage."





MOUNT NEBO. FROM THE VALLEY BELOW.

"Among the chief pasture-lands on the east of Jordan were those of Moab, whose King, like the chiefs of to-day, was a great sheep-master. . . In Moab the dust of the roads bears almost no marks but those of the feet of sheep."

DR. G. ADAM-SMITH.

CHAPTER V

Visitors and Helpers. 1889

THE augury for the year was good. With £20 in the Secretary's hands, encouragements came in other forms. The Alexandrian correspondent was always cheerily practical:—

"It will rejoice me greatly to hear that you have been able to send some portions to the Jowf and Nejd. . . The Turk is the great hindrance in Yemen as everywhere, My man Ibrahim was arrested as a British spy by the Kaimakan of Katabah in Yemen some while since. He made his escape when his guards were asleep, and crossed the line of the British Protectorate in safety, leaving a few books by sale behind him. Remember that 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.'

"I have been reading a Frenchman's joyous anticipation of the absolute quiet of a lodging on the top of the Eiffel Tower in Paris—a thousand feet up in the air. Kerak must be such a summit, with the exception of an occasional human hurricane. You have perfect exemption from the telegraph and the Turks, and a free field to fight the Devil in, with the recollection of victories in Fiji

and the New Hebrides as encouraging examples of the might of God's Word. . . . You have no greater savages to deal with than those who slew missionaries at Erromanga."

Major-Gen. Haig was at Alexandria, and was wishing to get into real touch with the Mission. He wrote :—

"There is no doubt, it seems to me, that you are in the most important position in North Arabia, for the evangelization of the Arab races—at 'the parting of the ways.' The one thing to be dreaded is the advent of the Turk. If he comes in, he will put you out."

And he *did* put them out, as we shall see.

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There were now two welcome items from England. A thousand copies of the "occasional paper," "A Mission to Kerak," had been printed and distributed; and the "Women's Auxiliary" Committee had made another year's grant for a "helper."

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But January had not come to an end before the old irritants were again in evidence, and the "human hurricane" was in full blast. The Mujellis tried a new rôle :—

"On Friday last two armed men appeared at the door with tidings that one of their people had been cut about by a sword, and a request from the chief that I would come to his help. Duty called, I thought; so I put scissors, plasters, oil, etc., in a bag, and went. A mile away they relieved me of the bag for a moment, then bade

me return, as the men would be sent in the next day. They have the medicines—I am powerless. It is all a lie: they want them for *a horse*, and think the truth will not avail to get me out; so invent this tale.

“The next morning, not two hundred yards from our abode, two of this family first shot and then cut the throats of two horse-stealers, or men reputed to be such. One of these murderers, I am told to-day, had been asking about me on Friday, and enquired especially why I wore such a beard, which, he said, was so likely a thing for a man to take hold of if he wished to cut my throat. But the hirsute lack has not saved those two poor fellows. . . The heat is of midsummer mid-day. Oh, the flies and fleas! But this is the neap-tide of patients and pupils, because of the high tide of heat.”

It was now necessary for one of them to take the journey to El Khuds for replenishment.

It was a puzzle to know which could be best spared, but the husband, it was decided, could do the necessary business the more expeditiously. Then it was necessary to go to Jaffa, too. . . If only some reliable lady friend would feel called of God to come and help! Or preferably, perhaps, a married couple!

On the journey Mr. Lethaby wrote from Medeba on the 28th March:—

“That ‘this is a wicked world’ seems more true than ever; you may be thankful that you stayed in Kerak. We got right out to the Eastern wilderness without even stopping in Mojib. Then all lost their way; and on Tuesday morning, before daybreak we were glad to rest in a poor Beni Sakr tent, anticipating the half-day’s hot ride into this place.

"Everybody is greatly disturbed because this week the Adwan has made a big raid on the Hameideh. I am at present safe, but there may be difficulty in getting back."

The journey onward was marked by the usual delays. Half an hour from Jericho there was a pleasant meeting with a number of American excursionists—and then a long waiting, of which our traveller grew so weary that he moved on alone—walked, slept, halted, and proceeded until he found himself inside the Jerusalem gates.

Thence he wrote :

"My idea is to go to Jaffa to-night, on to Port Said, Cairo, and Alexandria. Major-General Haig, is, I hope, still there. I shall endeavour to get some further help, and trust the same Providence will bring all home safely somehow,—perhaps via Salt. . . Boxes are packed to send to you, with letters. The Khedival boat goes on Thursday, and I hope to return from Alexandria to Jaffa direct on the following Thursday. John Bright is dead."

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The Sitt had very mixed news to report to her husband :

"*April 6th.* I cannot here tell you the pain and trouble E. is to me ; we *must* have help of the right sort soon.

"This morning, seven of the matrons of the Sunaar's house, Nowara's mother at the head, came over, in company, to ask me if they could see and talk to E. Of course I brought her in, and they gave her a good twenty minutes' preaching. She was slow to yield, but at last came, at their request, and acknowledged, with

tears, that she had done wrong, and wished me to forgive her. They left, evidently much rejoiced that the victory was gained. It was quite an interesting scriptural scene.

“One of these recent days, I had a great surprise in Abd el Maty’s house. Several men were there who had come to buy corn, and the grandmother seemed delighted to have the house full of people to listen to her grandson, as he read ‘the Book.’ We had sung our little hymn (one of Mr. L.’s new ones), and at the close of my short prayer, the children of our school who were present, had joined in the ‘*Abana illazi fe samawat*,’—‘Our Father Who art in Heaven.’ Then the child of the house, Abd el Maty, nine or ten years old, read the lesson from the gospel, of the paralytic man let down from the roof. I had just begun to explain about the works and words of Jesus Christ to the room full, when the old grandmother called out:—‘Why do you teach of this one? Who is this Jesus? I believe in Mahomet, he is the true prophet. Tell your teacher to talk to us of Mahomet.’ I turned to the boy sitting by me and said, ‘Ya, Abd el Maty, you can tell your grandmother what Mr. Lethaby has taught you from the “*Kitab Allah*” (the Book of God). Now, remember all you can, and I will pray God to give you right words.’ The bright boy, looking across to his grandmother, said, ‘Ya Jiddaty’ (Oh! my grandmother) ‘which is the greatest, the well or the cup?’ ‘*Maloom-el-bir*,’ ‘why, the well, of course.’ Then the child began, while I listened and prayed in my heart, as he remembered, and gave in order the prophet’s names, telling how ‘Allah had given words to the prophets and holy men for many hundreds of years, to teach the people the will of God. Then last of all, Allah sent **“Saidna Isa,”* our Lord Jesus, “Ibn Miriam,” son of

* A title Moslems allow to Jesus, Whom they revere as a great teacher

Mary. This is the same Jesus of the story we are reading. He healed the people, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, and the Jews put Him to death. But He died to save the people, and He rose from the dead, and after His people had seen Him many days, He ascended into Heaven. And, oh, my grandmother, this Jesus is "*heyat alan*"—living now—and that is why we pray to Him.'

"Then there was a pause. I wondered what next! The child looked full at his aged relative, and said, 'Ya Jiddaty, it was not till nearly six hundred years after Jesus went to Heaven that Mahomet was born, and he is dead. Which is the greatest, the well, or the cup? 'Oh! that is enough (*"Be kaffi"*), listen to your teacher!' And they listened for the next half hour."

Major-General Haig returned with Mr. Lethaby to Jerusalem and Kerak. The account of this visit, in the Major's own words, will have all the value of an independent testimony :—

"On the 30th of April we left Jerusalem. . . The road to Jericho—eighteen miles—is rough, and the descent some 3,600 feet. We met with no special difficulty; but a few days after we had passed, a caravan of merchants was attacked by Bedawin, plundered, and four men were killed. So the old difficulty remains.

"We were misled early next morning, and got entangled in some very awkward ground, which, if not the slime pits of Genesis xiv., corresponds well to the description. After a climb of 4,000 feet E. of Jordan, is a vast table land, large tracts of it being covered with wheat in the ear. The ruins of Heshbon were on our left horizon, with Nebo on our right. At Medeba, reached after sunset, we were most hospitably received.



RUINED TEMPLE OF MEDEBA.

"A few years ago, in consequence of some dissension in Kerak, many Christian families left that place, under Khalil Sunaar, and settled at Medeba, then a mere heap of ruins. I was struck with the fine physique of both men and women. One's heart warmed toward them, and it was impossible not to feel that they were 'brethren' indeed, in an important sense.

"As we made a large ring round the fire after supper, I suggested that one of them should read a little in my Arabic Testament. Khowadja Selim took it, and read to us John xiii., xiv. and xv., slowly, and with emphasis, pausing now and again to add explanation. A short conversation followed, and I fell asleep, amid the muttered sounds of Selim's prayers.

"The following day, for hours, we wound about among the hills, the Arabs keeping a constant look out for the hostile Hameideh tribe. Once, we saw from the top of a hill, a long line of black tents in the distance, and immediately plunged into some hollows, sneaking along out of sight. At length, the edge of the Mojib was reached. The mountains seem to have been cleft in twain, and a huge chasm, nearly 4,000 feet deep, lay in front of us, with steep, rocky sides, at the bottom of which, here and there, we could just descry the course of the Arnon, flowing between broad belts of oleanders in full bloom. It took us three hours to cross this great gap, and, at the end we were not three miles farther on our journey than at starting.

"The sun was well down in the west as we reached the crest of the southern slope; and we were still five hours from our halting-place. Darkness overtook us, and it was near ten o'clock before the welcome camp-fires of the 'bêitshâr'—(tents) of the Keraki appeared. A ride of four hours the next morning, Sunday, brought us into Kerak, where we had a hearty welcome, not only from

Mrs. Lethaby, who had not seen her husband for six weeks, but from the schoolboys and others who came swarming down the slope outside the walls, to greet us with an English 'How d'ye do?' and 'Welcome to Kerak!'

"The goods which Mr. Lethaby brought with us from Jerusalem, sundry stores and medicines sorely needed, had to be left at Medeba, for want of animals to take them on, and had not arrived when I left Kerak a fortnight later.

"The Lethabys keep the Sabbath with something of an old English reverence and delight. That evening the dark and dingy mud-floored room with its smoke-blackened roof, which is the whole of their dwelling, is tidied up and made to look a little brighter, and Sunday is kept with a hearty enjoyment which it is pleasant to see. Under such circumstances, my first Sunday's rest in Kerak was a pleasure indeed. Sunday School was, I think, the only regular work for the day, but we had our own reading and prayer, morning and evening, and there were talks with the boys, especially the English-speaking ones; and occasionally some sick or suffering one would drop in for medicine, which was always promptly given. It was a red-letter day in the little mission home, and when night closed in, and the simple supper was over, and the lamp lit, the old Moabite dwelling echoed to Christian hymns, and C. H. Spurgeon discoursed to us, before we finally laid ourselves down to rest.

"The total population of Kerak may be over eight thousand. But this number is seldom, if ever, actually resident in the town. The place has been so effectually isolated by nature that communication with the surrounding country is difficult and troublesome; and as the best pastures and much of the wheat cultivation are at a

distance of three or four hours, many of the inhabitants live out there in tents during a great part of the year. The Sheikh and his retainers almost always do so, only occasionally visiting Kerak. The Keraki thus retain many of their original nomadic habits, and though townspeople, are Bedawin still.

"The houses are all built after one model. Each consists of a single room, the flat roof of which is made of short, crooked rafters, about nine feet long, resting on rude semi-circular stone arches springing from the floor. The rafters are covered with a foot or two of earth. There are no windows, and a door about five feet by three-and-a-half feet is the sole entrance for both light and air. The floor is generally much below the level of the ground outside.

"The Lethabys live in one of these rude and rather dismal dwellings.* There is a small courtyard outside about two feet above the floor level. From this you descend at a jump into the low porch arched over with stone in front of the door, and enter by the latter into what seems at first simply a gloomy dungeon, but which, as your eyes become accustomed to the twilight within, you find is a good big room, with two or three chairs, a very small table, and a few boxes arranged to make a sort of couch, all these being placed near the door for the sake of light. The roof is black with smoke, and though a space about eight feet wide along each side of the room is raised four feet higher than the floor, the darkness there is so thick that you can only dimly guess, and need to be told that these ledges are used for store-rooms and such purposes. Part of one of them curtained off was my bedroom. In this room the Lethabys live, and in the porch and little courtyard outside carry on their

*See Illustration page 115.

school and medical work. The house is situated in the Christian quarter, in the northern part of the town.

“But if the houses are gloomy they are cool, the temperature in the outside porch never rising above 80°. The climate is healthy and delightful—Kerak being at an elevation of about 3,000 feet above the sea. Both Mr. Lethaby and his wife have better health than they ever had in England. Their fare is simple, but with little variety in it, consisting of bread, fowls, and eggs; very rarely vegetables, seldom any fruit, and milk and butter during only three months of the year. All the work of the house is done by Mrs. Lethaby, in addition to the mission work proper.

“As to the moral and social condition of Kerak, I should say that its most prominent characteristic is utter lawlessness. The Sheikh does not or cannot control his own relations and retainers, some of whom are the greatest robbers and murderers in the country; still less does he restrain other evildoers. Might is right. Life is held very cheap. I was myself overhauled in the coolest manner one afternoon when walking with Mr. Lethaby, by an Arab who met us, and who would certainly have appropriated my watch had I not taken the precaution to leave it at Jerusalem. He was fully armed, and fired his gun over my shoulder as a hint that any resistance would be resented. The *vendetta* is universal, even among the Christians so called. Not a year ago some of the latter literally cut to pieces a relative of a man who had killed one of their ‘āhl.’ What is to be done for such a people? The Lethabys’ answer to the question has been simply to plant themselves in their midst, and by preaching Christ and living Christ in the power of His Spirit, seek to win these people to Himself.

“Mr. Lethaby is a born schoolmaster. He has great power of holding the attention, and communicates instruction in a lively and interesting manner. The English class consists of Christian boys only. There are eight of them, from twelve to fourteen years of age. Finer, handsomer, more intelligent boys I never saw. They attend their own Church school (Arabic) in the forenoon and afternoon, and have only an interval of one hour and a half for English with Mr. Lethaby. The Bible is the text-book used. They can read with ease almost anywhere in it, and translate into Arabic. They have read also a little of other English books; and have learnt a good deal of geography and acquired a considerable amount of information of a general character. They converse readily in English, which is in fact the medium for much of the instruction they receive. They well understand Gospel truth, though there is no clear evidence as yet that it has become a living power in the hearts of any of them. What capabilities of good there are in these lads! Here is a seed-plot which, if blessed of God, may furnish men whose lives and labours will bring untold blessings to all Northern Arabia.

“The Arabic class consists entirely of Moslem boys. There are thirty of them, and none of them have been more than nine months under instruction. They have made excellent progress. All began from the very beginning. Many of them now read with comparative fluency. They have read parts of both New and Old Testament. They had just finished Deuteronomy when I was there. They have also learnt by heart, and can repeat the first of Genesis and eleventh of Hebrews, besides Arabic hymns of Mr. Lethaby’s own composition.

“The Sunday School is another very valuable agency. There are twenty Moslem boys and as many more Christians on the list.

“The medical work is very important. All sorts of cases come for help: sword-cuts, gunshot wounds, accidental injuries, besides ailments of all kinds. The Lethabys seek to adapt themselves to the whims and habits of the people at every point, that they may win them to Christ.

“A good many Bibles and portions of Scripture have been sold, as well as given away. The Moslem school has enabled Mrs. Lethaby to get access to twelve Moslem houses, where she conducts Evangelistic services. The mothers of the boys are allowed to invite her by turns to their houses for this purpose, and they look upon this as a privilege. I was at one of their services, when there were present six or seven women, two men, and a number of boys and girls. I was myself invited to address them. The Arabs are nominally Moslem, and seem to have much of the proud contempt for Christians peculiar to that religion, but they are very ignorant, and, I suspect, very lax in their religious performances. There is no mosque in Kerak.

“The Lethabys have an intimate knowledge of the families and individuals around them, which shows how firm a position they have gained. The work has outgrown Mrs. Lethaby's strength. She needs someone to help her in all the details of the housework, medical work, and visiting. A strong, thoroughly devoted, humble-minded, young English woman is required for this purpose.

“Then the medical work should be taken up by a properly qualified practitioner—a man who will turn his hand to anything, and be the servant of all in every sense in order that he may win some. He will find an immense field, not merely in Kerak itself, but among the nomad tribes around, including those in the Ghôr or low country round the Dead Sea, and those of the east, and south in

the direction of Maan and Central Arabia. It is very desirable, too, that as soon as possible some suitable buildings should be erected. Mr. Lethaby will best know when it should be taken in hand.

“I left Kerak on the 14th May, accompanied by Mrs. Lethaby, who needed a month's rest and change. We took the route by the Southern end of the Dead Sea. The journey occupied four days and a half, and proved very harassing and fatiguing. Mrs. Lethaby's side-saddle, being too large for the little donkey she rode, had to be left behind, and she had simply to sit on the pack on the donkey's back. That she was able to ride eighteen hours a day for two days in this way, and for fifteen hours and thirteen hours on the other two days, under a powerful sun, shows how much stronger she has become during her stay in Moab.

“There was much that was interesting in a journey through a tract of country so seldom traversed by Europeans, and abounding in sights and scenes associated with some of the most striking and solemn events of Old Testament history. The magnificent views during the descent from the mountains from Kerak, the beautiful scenery along the eastern side of the Dead Sea; the weird ride in the misty moonlight along the southwest shore, under Jebel Usdum (Sodom), and over ground, which, rightly or wrongly, the Arabs believe to have been the site of the doomed cities of the Plain; the steep climb of 5,000 feet to the tip of the mountains through the desolate wilderness of Ziph, and the subsequent ride northwards to Hebron—these are incidents of travel which will long linger in the memory. We spent three nights in the tents of the Bedawin, who, if they charged nothing for their hospitality, made us pay roundly for guidance through their wild country. The

journey satisfied us, at least, that the Northern route *via* Jericho and Medeba is the best.

"I left Mrs. Lethaby with friends at Bethlehem, for a rest she much needed, before again setting out on her lonely ride back to Kerak."

Inquiries were made as to what course a medical man, intending to practice in the Turkish Empire, should pursue in order to procure the necessary license from the Turkish authorities. It was discovered that a doctor would not be allowed to practice in Kerak except he had secured a diploma from Constantinople.

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The restful stay in and near Jerusalem was of very real value to the Sitt. She says: "I am fishing in many waters for a good helper, but I must try Jaffa, and then return with or without one, as soon as I can. . . I hope 'Tiddlewinx' behaves herself, and her kittens and cousins, too."

Major-General Haig's full account of his journeys, of the missionaries, and their surroundings, informed and greatly interested English sympathisers. There was a very strong feeling that the Sitt ought to have a "sister-companion" with missionary spirit enough to share the work and its hardships.

In Kerak there was wistful looking towards Jerusalem: "July 5th. If you don't come soon," says the lonely apostle, "I shall be an old man, if not a dead one. I can barely climb up into the 'mustaba' and down again." The worried husband

had a multiplicity of annoyances with converging difficulties which cannot be detailed ; and E. was increasingly trying, a real thorn in the side.

At length the Sitt was able to start Kerakwards, but without the helper, at any rate such an one as was looked for.

From Medeba she wrote to El Khuds :—

"July 11th. It is most trying to health and patience to be detained here in the house of Khalil Sunaar, because the men, all being engaged in the harvest, and not needing to earn money, are quarrelling among themselves as to who shall get the lion's share of what they agreed to take me for—twelve medjidehs to Kerak from this place.

"Now Kahlil tells me he has engaged three men to take the Muallim and me to Kerak. We are supposed to leave to-night and go by moonlight as far as the first tents. I shall be glad to get even to tents, for the night visitants are dreadful, and there are too many visitors of all sorts—gypsies—soldiers—officers. . . The crossing of Jordan was most trying, and made me feel how much the priests needed faith in their passage. I rode a camel, which was very much afraid through the swiftly flowing waters ; then I rode on easily along the plains of Shittim, on the border of which we were allowed to rest ten minutes and have some food. Then we crossed the Heshbon, and up and over one ridge of mountain after another, that I had to beg them to rest. But they dare not until reaching the full 'Koffel' at nine at night. Then I quite broke down, and the men were very much troubled at my inability to either get bed or food ready for myself. . .

"I could but be thankful that our Heavenly Father knows the weary journey through the wilderness. How

I thought of it as I was going over the ground which Moses and Joshua and the Beni Israel so surely trod.

"The country is full of the corn harvest, and hundreds of camels are loaded every few days to carry it—to you!"

Six days later they were still at Medeba.

"Only think of our being detained in this place—day after day. I am sitting on the floor writing this on the boxes, ready for the mules which are promised to come *soon*. . . The house and surroundings are full of harvest workers; and, until late at night, a constant change of company is sitting around the coffee-pot, smoking and talking. The women of the company are only a sort of useful encumbrance. . . Only to work and be scolded and never to read or have any pleasure in the outside circle of life is to me a sad sight. . . Somebody *must* come and help me with these Kerak women and girls. . . The noise and dirt, want of proper meals and lack of sleep, where one has to spread the 'lehaf' and pillow as one of ten, and sleep, so to speak, in public, is trying. No privacy, no real rest—and half-way to my husband and can get no further.

"There are the tents of the 500 soldiers, pitched just beyond the Greek Church, and they are in and out of this house constantly. Yesterday the Military Pasha came here to dine, and all worked like slaves. But when everything was ready he gave command that not a woman or child was to be seen. So we all had to disappear while the lord of the house received his guest!"

The rest of the journey was got through uneventfully.

Good news came from the London correspondent that carefully-selected stores had been sent, and

that liberal gifts had come in, arising from quickened interest awakened by Major-General Haig. Among others, an anonymous lady (post-mark, Boston) sent £5, "wishing it were five hundred."

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In September, the Kerak report runs:—

"We are not likely to rust out, though both of us are just now feeling something like being worn out. My husband had a serious attack of illness yesterday, as also a week ago, of a mysterious kind—paroxysms of pain and utter prostration—with strange tingling of the hands and one side. He is somewhat better, and is partially resuming his work—but is far from well. . . . The Muallim Raschid, whom I brought with me at the last moment, has served us a nasty trick. He came to Dr. Cant's and offered his services. All my troubles on the journey were on his account. He got into the teaching, such as it was. But during these few weeks he has sulked, and stayed away two or three times, yet persisted that he wished to remain with us. But after the 'Koffel' had left, he went off in the night, and followed them, not giving any notice to us, besides taking some books of ours with him."

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Turning from this new disappointment, the Sitt gives us a sweet sample sheaf from a field ripe unto the harvest:—

"Before school one morning, Ahmed came to me saying, 'Oh, Sitt! I am so happy, for old Subha died last night.' So I said, 'Come and tell me all about her.' Then he began: 'When I go home from school yesterday afternoon, I saw all the wailing women going to Subha's

house, with my mother and little sister Etraya, and I go too. When Subha see me, she call me to her, and ask me to give her some words my master teach me to-day. I think, old Subha dying, the 23rd Psalm good for her! And I say to the wailing women, "you all be quiet." I say some words to Subha from the Book of God, and they stop their wailing and are quiet. I sit down by old Subha and begin to say "*Er errub rahi, fu la ya wuzni sheyun,*" (The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.) And when I come to the fourth verse I say that *twice over* and say it *louder*, and I go on to "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," then "I shall *dwell (sakin) in the House of the Lord for ever.*" When I finish, Subha put her hand on my head and say, "*Allah m'barak inta. Allah m'barak inta.*" (God's blessing be upon thee.) And then all so still, and she died! I so happy, "*farhan keteer.*" I clap my hands and say "*Amd ill Allah!*" (Praise be to God). Subha die, and she not afraid. So I want to come and tell you before school.' "

There was a specially welcome letter from G.P., dated 5th November. "We have found, we think, the very best, most suitable lady helper for Mrs. Lethaby in Miss Mary Arnold—she will be a daughter to you." There also followed the suggestion of a likely Medical helper, but this eventually fell through.

The November letter mingles light and shade :—

"My old girls (says the Sitt) have come back to school with some fresh ones. We have often eight or ten, so that you may know we welcome the day of rest, though the Moslem children in the morning and Christian

children in the afternoon leave us little real privacy and reading time. Some of the Moslem lads now spend hours of the Sunday with us sitting outside with a big Bible, paper and pencil, finding texts to learn. Is not that cheering?

"The Mujellis have worried us sorely. One stole a shirt from near the door just after I had given him medicine. I ran and caught him, taking the garment from under his 'abbah,' but he beat my wrist with his sheathed sword and tore the shirt away, making off with it in sight of several people, who *dare* not say a word!

"Some Keraki well-known Moslems made a raid in the '*Ghor*' a short time since on seventy Hebron camels laden with corn, the property of the Sunaars. They stole the camels and wasted or stole the whole of the corn, besides taking the clothing and weapons of the twenty men in charge of the corn. These poor men have been staying here, most of them ill, until the booty was in part returned,—not the corn, that is lost. A little while ago the poor fellows returned, by the same route that I took, to their Hebron homes, vowing vengeance against the Keraki. It is a terribly lawless place. Little as the work may seem to outsiders, it is God's Word they are learning, and it *must* give light in the darkness."

Christmas brought good tidings. The Secretary of the London Council wrote, enclosing a photograph of the new helper, and commending her to the love and prayers of her anticipated colleagues, adding:—"I have taken Miss Arnold's passage in the *Arcadia* P. and O. Steamer to Alexandria. She leaves here on the 24th January. We are getting the Council into form on an undenominational basis." So closed 1889.

**'Now Mr. Greatheart was a strong man, so he was not
afraid of a lion.'**

BUNYAN.

CHAPTER VI

Welcome Guests. Furlough. 1890

THE Secretary of the "Palestine Exploration Fund" wrote on New Year's Day asking for notes, discoveries, facts or finds helpful to the Society's work, noting that the drawings W.L. had recently sent, probably represented crusading work. Mr. Lethaby had for years been a subscriber to the Society, and was deeply interested in its objects; he, therefore, all the more regretted that he could give but little "off-time" to its fascinations. Neither did Moab prove a specially happy hunting ground for the Society, Doughty and Tristram having largely covered its area by their researches.

In the current number of "Highways and Hedges," Mr. Lethaby takes the young people into his confidence and tells them:—

"When the greatest trials have pressed most heavily, when men armed with weapons, and with the authority which the terrified people have never failed to accord to the ruling Sheikhs, have pushed down our feeble little gate, and forced their way into our dwelling, demanding



THE PLAINS OF JERICHO, AND JORDAN VALLEY

blackmail or baksheesh—in these moments we feel that our ejaculations heavenwards, wonderfully answered, are not more really ours than yours—those of the ‘King’s remembrancers,’ in all parts of the world.

“If only I had a phonograph and a platform, and could let Salim Ali, with his childish prattle, repeat the first Psalm in Arabic, and then let half a dozen repeat together the first chapter of Genesis, and the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and other portions of Scripture! If only I could let you hear, ‘Take my life and let it be,’ or ‘Thou, oh! Christ, art all I want,’ sung by Bedawin Arab boys, who but a twelve-month ago knew not a word of English or any other printed language, you would form some idea, at least, of what has been accomplished.”

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Major General Haig voiced mission hopes when he wrote 4th February:—“Something might be done at Kerak about building hospital and houses; we might even have a regular medical school there and train young men to carry the Gospel to the Jowf and Central Arabia. This is just a crude idea.” Mr. Lethaby had, in fact, himself wished to consider moving on to the Jowf, and it was this which led him in 1893 to attempt the Persian Gulf entrance to Arabia.

Lethaby had written to Canon Tristram through the English Consul at Jerusalem, about a charming little specimen of the “Antelope Addax,” which had been placed at his disposal, and received from the Canon the following reply:—

"February 6th. It is an animal of great interest to naturalists, and they now make it—since I wrote my book—distinct from the African *Oryx leucoryx*. I do not want it for myself, but the Zoological Gardens of London would be very glad to have it, if it could be transported to England without much expense. . . I fear I shall never see Kerak again. I was at Medeba, Ziza, etc., eight years ago, but we did not get south of the Arnon. I must ever feel a deep interest in the work at Kerak, so marvellously opened since I knew the place."

It must have been this sweet little gazelle which eventually found hospitality at "Greenthorne," but under climatic conditions which proved, all too soon, disappointingly fatal.

The Sitt, of course, came to Jerusalem to meet Miss Arnold, whose home had been in Adelaide, and who had resided some time in India with her Mission sister. The journey was a trying one, only undertaken in the stormy weather because of their eagerness not to leave their new friend in uncertainty. The custom-house havoc at Jaffa was more reckless than usual, and the two travellers ran the four days' gauntlet homewards with much buffeting. But on the 25th March the master of the house was able to report:—

"The ladies got here three weeks ago to-night; and I was never more thankful for anything than for their arrival. Of course, our quarters are very cramped, and it is not the nicest way of life for Miss Arnold. But I think we all get on as well as the threefold strand of body, soul and spirit will allow.



MISS MARY ARNOLD IN EASTERN DRESS.

"The rumours as to the coming of 1500 or 1600 Turkish soldiers keep pressing on us. Our only trust is in the Prince of Peace, who is greater than all powers, and can use a Cyrus or a Sennacherib as He chooses."

Under date 23rd March, Mr. Lethaby received a letter from Mr. Gray Hill (now Sir John Gray Hill) of Birkenhead, which proved the initiation to an interesting friendship :—

"My wife and I started six days ago from Jerusalem to try to get to Petra, but yesterday had to give up the attempt owing to the fighting now going on amongst the Bedawins between here and there. We then determined to make for Kerak, and are now encamped a few miles from the Dead Sea to the S.E. We have with us a guard of sixteen Jehalin, but are not satisfied with the Sheikh. . . We want to get to Kerak as soon as we can. The British Consul gave me the enclosed letter to the Sheikh of Kerak, recommending us to him. Will you please give it to him, and ask him to come or send an escort to us to Nimierah, which we hope to reach to-morrow?"

Half an hour after receiving this letter, Mr. L. had dispatched five Christian men and two Mujellis. Of course, the other Mujellis got wind of it, and swooped down triumphantly. Sheikh Saleh also heard of it, and reached the scene the same day, hungry and greedy.

He would not allow them to proceed without a promise of money. They wanted to return, but he foresaw this, and posted a guard in the rear to prevent it. Thus they were completely hemmed in, and had to make the best terms they could.

They were not allowed to proceed until Sheikh Saleh had received thirty Napoleons in cash, and a promise of another thirty on arrival in Kerak.

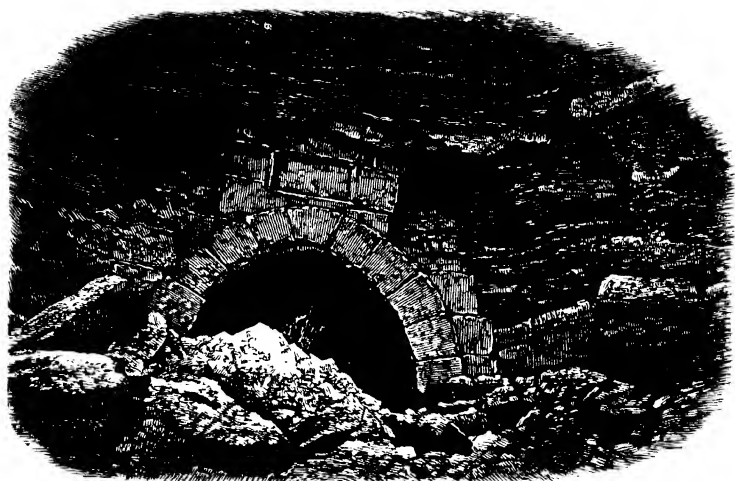
Mr. Gray Hill's own graphic record of this visit, in his book, *With the Bedawin*, will furnish us with a living picture of these brief days of sojourn:—

“The day was very hot, 92° in the shade, so we rested in our tents until four in the afternoon, when one of our messengers returned from Kerak bringing a letter from Mr. Lethaby, which was carefully tied up in the man's shirt. Soon afterwards there came nine horsemen of this tribe—tall, handsome, dark, dignified men, mounted on fine horses. With them arrived our second messenger, Sheikh Saleh's negro slave, who was grinning from ear to ear at the success of his long journey, and in joyful anticipation of baksheesh and food.

“The next morning we went on, and Sheikh Saleh himself met us at El Draa. Others of the Keraki arrived later in the day, until there were fifteen of them.

“A long colloquy as to terms followed. Saleh would have thirty napoleons down; . . . to this we had to consent; . . . and at last we started for Kerak.

“As our horses scrambled up the steep side of the hill on the summit of which Kerak stands, we saw a little man in European dress, worn to the extreme of tenuity and shabbiness, climbing down on foot, and knew that it must be good Mr. Lethaby come to welcome us. He walked by our side as, wondering, we tramped through the dark tunnel into the wretched collection of one-storied hovels which constitute the town. As we threaded the dirty lanes, from which ill-looking faces stared out upon us, it was a pleasure to see a female figure clothed in a neat, clean, simple English dress and apron, crowned by an honest, smiling, friendly English face. This was



ONE OF THE MAIN ENTRANCES. KERAK.

Mrs. Lethaby, and here in this poor room, lighted only by the door, is the residence and schoolroom of the missionaries and the mission.

"Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby are so patient, so simple, so earnest, so averse from manufacturing hypocrites, so free from cant of any kind, so careless of small doctrinal and ceremonial points, so brave and determined, that we were lost in admiration of their zeal and devotion.

"The daily perils and annoyances to which they are subjected would be enough to drive away all but those of lion heart."

The settlement with Sheikh Saleh was of the nature of similar transactions with which we are now familiar—the cry of the horse leech. Then Sheikh Khalil presented himself with his two fierce-looking sons, and the process of bleeding was repeated.

"At last Sheikh Saleh," continues Mr. Gray-Hill, "was ready to take us from Kerak on the road towards the gorge of Mojib, and we began to walk down the hill in the charge of Mujelli and his horsemen, Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby kindly accompanying us. . . .

"My wife was greatly comforted by Mrs. Lethaby, with her husband's consent, generously offering to ride with her for the first day's journey, and although the brave little woman was quite unprepared for travelling, she mounted a donkey and rode on. . . . There could be no formal adieu with the husband; so he vanished—lagged behind—ducked behind a stone and disappeared."

Other semi-tragic details are given of the continually checked progress of the party, and then :
"the brave little woman departs with the son of

the Greek priest of Kerak, who had accompanied her ;—God's benison go with her."

There is a paragraph of generous reference to two of Mr. Lethaby's boys,—who had kept quietly with the travellers, to render them such help as they were able.

" The little Christian boys, Musa and Saleh, came often to see us. They brought their Arabic Bible, in which they evidently took great interest, and their whole behaviour and tone of mind were as different as possible from that of the grasping savage Mujelli. They appeared to us like little sheep amongst the wolves. They told us of the wild beasts that prowled about at night and threatened the flocks,—of a kid that had been taken from their goats the night before; and of a shepherd, who, last year, had been killed by a wolf. They lived entirely on bread and 'leben' (sour milk), except on the occasion of a feast, when they got some mutton and rice. We were unable to keep the boys with us for long at a time, as the other Keraki soon followed them into our tent, or we should have been very glad to have seen more of them. . . The Lethabys sent us, by a chance messenger, some loaves of bread, with a welcome piece of boiled ham cunningly concealed within it, lest it should offend Moslem noses. How we enjoyed it."

Mrs. Gray-Hill tells of the succeeding days of travail, in a letter to the Sitt:—

" We are guarded strictly, but after an appeal to the Sheikh they have been really bearable. These dear boys, the fruit of your work, have been true and faithful.

" At times, the burden of captivity is heavy; but we can never thank you enough. Sheikh Khalil swore by his head he would be good to you both. . . We told him

that we came for pleasure, but that you had both given up friends and comfort and come to them for the love of God. He said it was good. When we said we had never seen you before, but that we were frightened and ill, and that you came just to help us, they listened politely, and again swore by their heads—both lifting their hands to the 'aghal,—they would be true."

But the outcome was not satisfactory; and through the English Consul, they learned that Mr. and Mrs. Gray-Hill had happily been released, but not until they had paid the further sum of sixty Napoleons to Sheikh Khalil, besides some other gifts valued at 200 francs, and, withal, seven days' detention. . . They decided to make a claim through the Turkish authorities; but were most anxious that nothing should be done to jeopardise the safety of the Lethabys or Miss Arnold. . . It seemed desirable, in the interests of future travellers, and of the Christian population, that these robbers should not escape scot free.

The acting Consul in Jerusalem was most anxious that the three missionaries should all come to the Holy City, while the Government sought to gain ascendancy in Kerak, as appeared to be their immediate intention. With this knowledge, Mr. Lethaby wrote, on April 29th:—

"It is impossible for me to comply with your advice, and leave our work and all our belongings, for the sake of presenting ourselves in Jerusalem. . . We have done what we could to minimise danger and inconvenience to

all ; but we should only add to the ferment, if we were to leave, and could not effect any good.

“ Our absence would almost certainly be fatal to the work, which is to each of us more important than any number of francs or lires. Our lives came from God, and are in His hands. As He has given us a work to do, He will not forget us.

“ Much of the proposed action of the Turkish troops is because some of the inhabitants of Kerak (Christians) wish, for trade purposes, that the road should be safe ; the Hameideh punished ; and the Mujelli power crippled, while in the *presence* of the latter, they profess all allegiance to them.

“ Our own course is clear. Mrs. L. and Miss A. are at perfect liberty to return ; but I do not think they will. I shall remain here until I see it my duty to throw up the work which I believe to be the work of God, and which, however feebly, I am trying to do.”

Mr. Gray-Hill's decision in the matter was at once generous and loyal : May 6th, he says, “ As you decline to leave Kerak, I have told the Acting Consul that I shall not press any personal claim, which may imperil you. It is not, however, a question relating to the Mujellis alone. All the other tribes have heard of the affair, and if the M. go unpunished, they will imitate their conduct. . . . Probably the Turks will go to Kerak for their own purposes, and quite irrespective of us.”

Miss Arnold's early experiences were of tormenting interest. She says :—

“ I am reading Arabic with Mahomed Nablous for the pronunciation. He is the eldest of our Moslem boys, and

a nice, intelligent fellow. When I can read, he is to have a complete Arabic Bible ; at the thought of which he is greatly delighted.

“ A few days ago, one of the Christian Arabs came to this house, demanding payment of some money, which, he said, Mr. L. owed him, but which he did not. He came with an iron bar about eighteen inches long, one blow from which would have fractured any one’s skull. To emphasize his words, every now and then he would crash down this bar on our box table, till he made the boxes jump again. In his fury he upset the table and assaulted Mr. Lethaby, knocking him over backwards as he sat in his chair. Mrs. L. and I tried to restrain him, but it was only the power of God that kept him from committing murder. He walked round the room asserting he should take goods to the value of the money.

“ Coming to my ‘ mustaba,’ he threatened to take my things. I popped up and stood guard, and as the curtain reached right across he could not see much. One or two little things I valued I slipped into my pocket. Finally, he stalked off, saying he would fetch the Mujellis to break down the house and steal everything.

“ The next morning he tried to force our gate, which was locked ; but Mrs. Lethaby sat on the bar of wood which rests against it ; and even he was not brutal enough to knock her over. In the evening peace was made ; he came, apologised, and we shook hands all round. Then we had a cup of tea together ; and he sent Mr. L., as a peace offering, a saucer of butter, and the matter ended !

“ So the work goes on ; amid storm and tempest there are occasional gleams of sunshine. Now and then some little incident occurs which seems to say—‘ Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ ”

Mr. Lethaby adds :—

“ Miss Arnold’s letter is a pretty complete account, and you can probably read between the lines; but you can scarcely tell how reassuring it has been to fall back continually on the promises ‘writ in eternal brass’; and to gratefully remember the friends whose prayers are far beyond their kind subscriptions.

“ I want to see a Bible Society’s Agent go from here to the Persian Gulf—slowly and surely; and then I could sing Simeon’s song.

“ *April 30th.* This moonlight night Mrs. L. and Miss A. have gone, with one of our Christian purveyors, to look in at the weird festivities—horrors and ceremonies, that prelude and accompany a Moslem circumcision! Dances, sometimes with swords, sometimes without; shouting, clapping of hands, and what passes as singing, with other strange antics. . . .

“ If there is no danger we need not leave; and if there is, the more need that we should stay and do what we can. But this is only playing with pen and ink; there is good reason to fear that other weapons will really be used when this Ramadan has waned to its conclusion. My one prayer is ‘Give peace’ not only in our time, oh Lord, but all through. It is not these apparent dangers that wrinkle my face the most, but the littleness of what we are able to do. . . . The foolish people here have too little perception of what the advent of the Turkish soldiers really means. They only think they will get ‘out of the frying pan!’—poor sprats.”

On June 4th, he ventilates his hopes to the Council in London :—

“ Though there are times when the experimental thermometer is almost at zero, yet noting each anniversary as it comes round—(May 29th was the close of the second

full year of Moslem school work),—there is real ground for congratulation and infinitely more for continual thanksgiving. Comparing this day with June 4th of last year, we have great reason for rejoicing. . . .

“I think more of progress and extension than I make known in words. I hope yet to see Maan, sixty miles south; and, if not at the same time, ‘the regions beyond,’ yet to know that at some time, not very remote, the work will be commenced. Going to Maan as a resident here, the suspicions of the Moslems would not be aroused, and enquiries could be made as to the road onward to Uejd in Central Arabia.”

Canon Fausett, of York, still occasionally wrote with brotherly sympathy and affection;—

· “*June 27th.* I have never ceased to pray for you from the moment you went out. Since the time you rendered your valuable help to my Bible Cyclopædia, I have brought out a commentary on the Judges and a Book of Illustrations of the Psalms. . . . Do you agree with Conder as to the Cromlechs and Menhirs being the high places of Balak and Balaam?”

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Mr. Lethaby now found it *possible* and *necessary* to visit England, and reports on his journey:—

“*July 28th.* The first verses of the 103rd Psalm to begin with, please. After leaving you, I climbed up the hill and lay down behind a stone, just as six or seven of the mounted ‘locusts’ came within hearing. Nearing their tents at Rabbah, Ibrahim and I walked together rapidly, apart from all the others.

“At the Kasr, Daoud Mujelli seized my old hat and threatened to steal the donkey. . . . On Tuesday the best hours were wasted in out-of-the-way Mojib ravines

which began to kill me; and to add to my woes I had a kick from Salim's horse, followed by a day of great pain and blundering. The bye-ways of Mojib are worse than the highways.

"The next day we talked and waited while it was cool, and so wasted much of it; and after sunset I had to walk and almost carry the donkey into Medeba. Ibrahim had loaded it first with his own requirements, and I was an afterthought which the poor moke resented.

"By the time we got to the waters at the foot of Pisgah on Thursday morning, the wear of previous days had done for me. . . . My old pain agonized me as in the Lebanon, and prevented riding, even when the donkey was willing to carry me. But God was gracious indeed, and though with pains of purgatory, two Arabs brought me and the donkey and the repentant Ibrahim—who had lost both beast and way—to the Jordan bridge soon after sunset. So I slept in Palestine on the first piece of land on Jordan's brink; but had to hobble at least four-fifths of the way afterwards. . . . The steps up those limestone hills I shall never forget.

"During Friday night, like 'Faithful,' I remembered another key I had forgotten, and I could just whisper a word at a time to Ibrahim. . . . Oh! it was good to stay in Bethany at the 'House Beautiful' in Sister Florence's care for a whole day, and in the evening, by her kind thought, to meet a carriage coming for me. . . .

"So we reached the Prussian Hospice and found rest. . . . But good Mr. Bayer did not want such a skeleton carcase as mine under his charge. So he recommended me to the Hospital, where, with medicine, fresh air, the best of food, and suitable drink, I am now (Monday morning) thanking the 'God of my mercy.'

"*Tuesday.* Dr. W. will not let me leave the house yet: so that whether I can get away to Jaffa to-night and from

Jaffa to-morrow I do not know. . . . My getting back to you must be by night by the moon after this, or the one after that,—the third or fourth week of the moon.

“*Wednesday.* Dr. W. has just told me of a good opportunity for getting down to Jaffa to-night in a carriage with some friends. . . . This is ‘a sign for good.’ ”

Miss Cavendish, of Jerusalem, in informing the Sitt of her husband’s welfare, added :—

“I am perfectly delighted with Mr. L.’s Arabic hymns. They are just what are needed for our Mission Services and children’s gatherings. They will help us more in our work than aught I know of. . . . How I wish Kerak was as near as Hebron, or as accessible.”

Then the ladies of Kerak could, on the whole, send the traveller good news.

“31st. Isa Sunaar wants to know where you are, and who stays with us to take care of us. I told him that we two little English women were dwelling in peace; and because God protected us we were not afraid.

“Three Moslem women bring us beautiful grapes, &c., each day. . . . Im Isa’s broken collar bone gives her much pain, but neither she nor her people would allow me to do anything with it at first. . . . This morning I went to Abdel Maty’s baby brother Fellah, and found him dying. The women had burnt his stomach and applied a great plaster of egg and soap. He was better yesterday, but the burning finished the poor child’s sufferings, and he was buried at noon to-day—less than a year old.

“Yesterday some Ket-Rubba men were trying to shoot birds, when the gun of one went off suddenly and shot his companion dead, close to the city. To-day the master

of the dead man found Selma's servant, a relative of the young man, knocked him off his mule, beat his head, arm, face, back and thighs fearfully, leaving him as dead. A man put him on the mule and bore him back to Selma's house. I fear the poor man will lose his eye, but I hope to save his life. He is helpless and nearly senseless.

"When our poor Smug's kittens died the other day she cried sadly for a while; and then took to washing Budge's face. The affection was mutual, and he now enjoys the attentions of two mothers. Harab has since brought in a tiny motherless kitten, and Smug at once assumed responsibility. You will rejoice to know we found and killed the scorpion lost on the Saturday night. The cats growled, and we found it under the mat at your chair. Miss A. and Bobby Lowe killed a monster at the door the other day. . . .

"Salim rejoices in a new brother and a new 'abbah.' The little fellow went down to Ain Maghier to find his mother at noon, when some men beat him and tried to steal his 'abbah.' The child ran all down to his home and managed to hide it in the bed-place under the trees, and could neither find his mother nor any bread, and the house was locked up. So he came here about four o'clock, tired and white. The share of the chicken which Miss Arnold had not eaten was just ready for the poor little lad, and he did enjoy it. . . . We have abundance of figs now; grapes have ceased, but we have been well supplied this year. . . . I nothing lack but rest of body.

"*August 7th.* Imagine how I felt on finding how near to Heaven you were at Pisgah's foot. I told the children how poorly you were and how the English 'hakim' was making you stronger. They shouted for joy when I said you loved the 103rd Psalm, and that it helped you. So we are learning it in Arabic and English too.

"The boys appear happier here than at home, except Mahomed Nablous, who seems to be possessed with an evil spirit, poor boy. He has not been to school for four days, and runs from me like a hare. I have been several times to the parents, and his father wished me to know that he wants M. to come."

Only a brief message came from Port Said, dated 1st August:—"Tell the children to recite the 117th Psalm, and to say to God the 'Hallelujah' for me." . . But W.H.T. added:—"We were much surprised to see Mr. L. come into the depôt early this morning looking so ill. . . We have arranged for him to go on by the P. and O. *Clyde*. As there is no room second-class, the manager allows him to go first-class at a reduced fare. You will, I am sure, be glad, although he himself objected. . . But the weather is hot and he quite poorly; so he will get all comfort and the attention of a doctor. . . I feel sure he will be a new man by the time he sees Plymouth."

He himself wrote from Brindisi:—

"4th. I did seem a poor, gaunt, cadaverous creature among the first-class passengers. . . Plenty of washing and food has changed me a little. . . Yesterday we were near Greece all day. It was a usual ship Sunday, with very little worship in it. . . This morning, thank God, I have had the first moments, for more than a fortnight, of real comfort, and it is such a blessing."

On Friday, 15th, he was able to send from Sidmouth:—

“Once more I am writing in the early morning in the room upstairs. Yesterday at 2.30 a.m. we got into Plymouth Sound, and before three in the afternoon I had walked through Sidmouth Cemetery to the Market Place. All well. We had a good laugh together.

“I am nicely in body, but they tell me I am very thin, though not much altered. . . You will be glad to know the folks here have been rigging me out. Even my best hat is voted to be old and shabby, and a new one has been put on my head.”

A warm welcome to England came from G.P.: —“It is not every day we can receive an Arab Sheikh. We have room for you without the camels, and we are hoping that your own presence and your mission story will win you help. But you must rest awhile.”

Many invitations came to speak, and almost every available day was soon filled in. The engagements covered ground from Saltburn-on-Sea to Frome; and one of his earliest visits was to his friend, Mr. Pritchett, at Bournemouth.

From New Oscott, on the 23rd August, he reported progress to Kerak:—

“I am on the warpath and prospering. Calling at Saltburn on Tuesday I had the opportunity of speaking *en route* in Canon Fausett’s church in York. Had great kindness shown me at Halifax and at Greenthorne; and at noon yesterday there was a warm welcome and surprise at Mr. Gray-Hill’s, at Birkenhead. Got to

Birmingham at six this morning, sleeping a great part of the night. Welcomed at the Orphanage."

By the following Thursday evening he was in London, and wrote :—

"My passage is taken. I go across the Continent by rail to Brindisi, and expect to reach Port Said by the 24th September. Everybody is wondrously kind. Tomorrow I go to Watford, thence to Bath and Bristol, and to Frome on Sunday. There is much interest shown on all hands."

Frome, in addition to collections, provided for an excellent completely-fitted medicine chest, which proved a great boon. This was mainly the gift of his old colleagues at B. and T.'s.

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At Kerak, events moved on much in the old order.

"20th Aug. On Saturday morning," says the Sitt, "I had Sheikh Salame, son of the one who stopped you on the Esplanade. He came for medicine, and I made him go into N's porch. His side and ribs were badly bruised and swollen from a beating with a stone from a Sheikh of the Maiti. I treated him as best I could, and gave him a lecture on his name, and its meaning, and the day of judgment. He was very meek, being in great pain. I told him to come again, but have not yet seen him.

"Sheikh Hassein's son Achmed came yesterday, and with him one with his face all covered; but I knew him. Both seemed ashamed. I addressed Bedr by name. Then he took down his 'mendile' and spoke: so I gave him medicine as the other. . . . Several of the Hebron

men are on our list. They are most grateful, but the *medicines are going*.

"We two are kept in peace. Kerak knows of your illness on the road, and your going to Jaffa, so will not be surprised at your delay in returning.

"Last Saturday week Ibrahim took a packet of letters, as he and Subhi, the poet, went off with a small flock of sheep that night for Girius Sunaar. Lo! on Tuesday afternoon they reappeared flushed and excited. They had been allowed to return, and handed me the letters all right; but the Hameideh had relieved them of all the sheep. Two days after, however, another 'Koffel' went off in great haste. . . We seem busier than ever. . . I am glad to tell you that the bad fit of M. Nablous has ended. I found him at home, and brought him, in tears and repentance, back again. His brother, I find, was the first cause of the mischief.

"Muallim Khusus says he is my servant and brother to command while you are away.

"25th. Of course, as I only *believe* you are in dear old England, I write in faith, though there is the painful possibility that you may be detained in Jaffa, unable to go on. . . So imagination is at work, seeing you flitting up and down England like a ghost, startling the good folks in more ways than one. . . Do not hurry back on our account. . . Rest under your dear mother's care. Let Councils and Committees take care and do all the talking—you *must* get rested and come back stronger.

"There are many queer strangers about, so one of us is always here; and only in case of necessity do I go away. . . The Awital have come in to buy corn, and there are many camels moving to and fro. The Sheikh of the Adwan wants to come in to see Kerak and the castle; but Sheikh Saleh and all the Mujelli wish him

not to know the poverty and ruined state of the city. We are quite in clover now! Onions, foorsooth! It was very good of Saleh, of Damascus, to remember us. They brought them on their way to Mecca, and were met by Keraki at Durb-el-Hajj.

Later. "Yours from Port Said has come with many others, including the draft Constitution of the Council. . . It points more to the workers of the future than to us, perhaps. . . I must beg to retire into private life if I need to pass an examination in Arabic.

"'Scamp,' the Gazelle, gets so strong and saucy; he and 'Budge' romp and eat together, 'Budge' still being the suckling of old 'Smug,' who has renewed her youth in caring for the pretty little thing's daughter—that refined cat refusing to be in the nursery any longer. 'Gagus' has grown to an enormous size. He and 'Scamp' are the two gentlemen of the place. 'Scamp' actually has taken to standing up kangaroo fashion for bread, like the cats. If your face were ever so long, you couldn't help laughing to see the several cats and gazelle all begging for bread at meal-times."

A closely-written letter of Mr. Lethaby to the Sitt from Sidmouth, Sept. 3rd, is all of a quiver with movement; rest was impossible to him.

During this stay in England he and the active friends of the Mission were anxious to secure a married colleague possessed of the true missionary spirit, with such general equipment as would be equal to the special needs of this singularly difficult field. There were a number of men who responded to the invitation, but who, on learning how much of sacrifice and how little of personal

and home comfort were involved in it, wisely declined the responsibility.

Much as the Lethabys desired companionship—pined for it—it was a serious business to seem to persuade any persons to entangle themselves in its toils. And in interviewing those whose zeal and piety prompted them to the work, Lethaby made no effort to disguise the very hard conditions of service. The need was patent enough. The manner of the labour must depend upon the resourcefulness of the labourer. As for the adult Kerakian mind and heart—it was either utterly waste with neglect, bewildered with the semi-moral Moslem teaching and its fearfully imperfect moral code, or satisfied with the half-barbaric rites and teaching of the Greek Church, with a very low standard of right and wrong. A difficult task indeed to sow Christian seed into ground already so preoccupied. The Christian life lived in their midst seemed the only possible effective influence among the men and women. With the children there was hope. And to these the Lethaby's gave the best they had of love, and instruction, and training. The difficulty was to make their work continuous, and so effective!

“W.L. had a dream that some day one or more of his Kerak boys might be found in an English middle-class school. It was to this that a friend referred: ‘I have not forgotten your wish . . . when the right time comes, I will help it as much as I can.’ But the wish has not yet been realised.

Many pressing invitations for meetings, and Mrs. L.'s assurance that all was going on well at Kerak, determined Lethaby to defer his return until 'after the next full moon, when I hope there may be somebody in Jerusalem to convey me back to Arab and Kerak life.'

He continues on the 11th :—

"Yesterday was a red-letter day. I was at the Mission House, Bishopsgate Street, and at 11 o'clock was put into a seat by the Rev. G. W. Olver at the end of the Committee table, and heard Dr. Osborn from the chair give out, two lines at a time, a little-known hymn from memory. Professor Agar Beet, sitting next me, prayed. The first to come from his place and shake hands was Mr. Langdon, of Ceylon; next Mr. Nettleton, of Fiji, then Mr. R. W. Allen. Mr. Olver most deliberately announced three visitors—the third was myself. Dr. O., from the chair, expressed their pleasure at my presence. In acknowledging the honour, I said I felt sure that you two, who were holding the fort until the Missionary Committee was strong enough to take it off our hands, would be possibly more grateful and proud than myself. The Doctor said 'Amen' to my suggestion."

The Sitt wrote on the 13th :—

"I am so glad to know that you had vitality enough left for a laugh when you got home. We are chiefly afraid of your returning before you are hale enough for the journey. . . Little 'Budge' will insist on sitting on my hand when I write. She is such an affectionate little thing I cannot get her away. 'Scamp' has been poorly for two days; all his fun had gone; he is so moping. But I gave him aconite, &c., and he is at once better and getting saucy. All the adult cats are well.

"We have had several Mujellis for medicine at different times, and they have all been civil since my first 'setting down.' To-day Musa Khusas came to tell me that Sheikh Khalil had sent for him, Musa, to come to ask if the Sitt would bring him, K., to her house. I thought it over, and sent him a polite answer to the effect that my husband was away, working for Kerak, and it was not the custom for me to ask a Sheikh to my house unless my husband was here. Musa soon returned saying, Sheikh Khalil wanted to see me either in my house or another, to write an English letter. So I told Musa to take him to his, Musa's, house, and let me know when he was ready. So at eleven we dismissed the children,—nine of them now,—then took a little lunch and had prayer together, as I felt we had to do or write something affecting the welfare of Kerak. I took Miss A. with me, and pen, ink, and paper. Sheikh Khalil was dignified and very cordial. I wonder if his two sons had told him what I told them on Saturday morning.

"He informed me, after greetings, that he wished me to write now to Mr. and Mrs. Gray-Hill, and tell them, if they or their friends, or *we* and our friends wanted to come to Kerak, they and we may depend on his friendship and protection in the city and on the road hither. And if they or we desired to *make* a school or church or hospital here, we were free to do it, and no one should harm them or us. I asked Miss Arnold to write this, and Musa read it and '*tipseered*' to the Sheikh, who said it was what he wished. He then handed his seal to Muallim Girius. He wished a letter to the same effect to be written to the English Consul at Jerusalem. His seal was put to this also. He was very complimentary, adding, wherever I journeyed, I should travel safely. I told him I was already safe, and asked that my husband be not molested in going out or coming home. When

Sheikh K. asked if we would like to eat now; we declined, but accepted coffee when he offered it. Musa said, 'We better not talk on other things'—cautious Musa! So after a few minutes we rose and salaamed, and came home to thank God for answering our prayers."

But this fair morning, too, turned out a stormy day; for Miss A. says on the 19th September:—

"The whole air yesterday seemed to smell of Satan. Talk of the 'powers of darkness' being let loose! Evil spirits were all round. We came in for our share from a, so-called, Christian man, who tried to force our gate, to wrench Mrs. Lethaby's arm over it and climb over the wall. We could not help firing a salvo of pretty strong language at him—the dastardly coward! He is hand and glove with the worst of the Mujellis. At last, after calling us 'English dogs,' &c., he was persuaded off the premises by several other men, and we have not seen him since. At the same time there was a sword and stone fight going on at the top of the city, and another dispute at one of the flour mills down in the Sāl. So altogether we had a lively day."

And the Sitt could not speak of returning tranquillity on the 17th:—

"Muallim Khusus has no faith in the promise of K., either to the Hills or the Consul. He thinks it an excuse for getting power over and money from us. You may see the acting Consul. It may be best. . . Do bring enough for yourself to eat on the journey, and don't give away your last crumb of bread until you have passed Mojib.

"We are happy, and I believe useful to a greater number than ever."

Mr. Lethaby continued to receive many cordial invitations for meetings, and he wrote from Glasgow, 25th:—

“ You have no idea what a whirl I am in, and hardly know if I am on my head or my heels. . . . To-day I walked eleven miles to interview one of our most prayerful helpers, whose cards to you I enclose. . . . And now there is a possibility of my even going to talk in Belfast and Dublin. . . . This will not keep me longer; my latest date being Princes Hall, Piccadilly, Friday, October 10th; and as soon as possible after that, by P. and O. steamer, I hope to be in Khuds.”

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Space may well be spared for pathetic but glowing words from one who, six years before, had proved himself a friend indeed. Dr. Prout thus writes to W.L. from Manchester:—

“ *October 4th.* I can hardly look to have a place in your memory, but you may recollect a severe injury you had in 1884 at Port Said from the teeth of a shark, or some other evil fish, while bathing, and that a little old Englishman from the Soudan, then on his way home, whom you had kindly introduced to our men in barracks, assisted the doctor to dress your bad wound, and all that. At that time you were loyally and zealously doing very uncongenial work in that horrible place, Port Said. But you were, I remember, then longing for your old mission work; and in that wonderful field you have realised your desire, I trust. . . . I shall greatly like to hear your Kerak experiences. . . . In thought I have followed you beyond the East of that long mountain-wall I looked at across the Dead Sea years ago, into the fastnesses of

Moab, and half envied you your labour of love among these, till then, unreached tribes. . . Two years my dead doctor pronounced mine to be a clear case of overdone brain, and told me I must not attempt work of any kind! but you know that is a prescription not easy to follow. . . I have been permitted to do an occasional poor bit of work among the Manchester Ship Canal navvies, and among the sufferers from the terrible Welsh mine explosions, so sadly frequent. But I am pretty well played out, I fancy."

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There is a letter to the Sitt from Dublin :

"*October 4th.* The thought that prompted me to write at this time was the prayer that the Rev. C. Inwood has just been offering for you and Miss A., and that the right helper may be given us. . . Last Friday evening's meeting at Glasgow was a splendid missionary gathering in the City Hall. The next day, in the Queen's Rooms, I had to speak, preceded by Dr. Torrance, of Tiberias, and followed by Com. Booth-Tucker. I was speaking again in a tent in the afternoon and evening, and preaching on Sunday afternoon in Claremont Street Wesleyan Chapel. Must I confess, too, that in the afternoon I had a talk to a dinner party of 1,000 children, and in the evening, at the Christian Institute (Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.). Then to supper at Dr. Bonar's, the father of Mrs. Oatts (at whose home I slept in Glasgow), and who has been interested in our work all through. He is a veteran survivor of the 1843 disruption, brother of the poet, and himself a writer and traveller in the East. . .

"In Belfast, I spoke on Wednesday evening, at a Presbyterian gathering, and on Thursday, at Drogheda, coming here yesterday. . .

"My ship is the *Sutlej* which leaves Thursday week,

and which I hope to join at Brindisi on Sunday week. I have still six or seven engagements; that is how I rest."

The watchful Sitt, on November 5th, gave her wifely marching counsels:—

"Once more, I am sending off two men to conduct you to this abode. I have instructed Saleh and Oudy Abgalim, to wait for you in Jerusalem until you *do* arrive. . . As we have had tokens of rain, I send the warm shoulder wrap the Cornish clergyman gave me.

"All the mighty men of Moab are away at their ploughing; only the sick, and children, and weak women, with such as Muallim and Ibrahim left to defend the city. At present, all is quiet, but there is no telling what is brewing. . . The dear children are a comfort to us, and I am sure a gracious work is begun in Moh. Nablous, and good impressions on the hearts of all."

Meanwhile, Mr. Lethaby had safely reached Jerusalem, and was staying in the Prussian Hospice. Many messages continued to nerve the missionaries: I.E.P., from Halifax, quotes from the "Atlantic," some last words from "the fine old poet-moralist, O. W. Holmes—chatty and bright as ever, though past four-score.—Oh, if we could all go out of flower as gracefully, as pleasingly, as we came into blossom!"

Here, too, is a good word for the two in the furnace from Rev. Thos. Champness:—" 'They have no hurt.' No hurt! and yet they are in a furnace of fire. . . No hurt! and even not asking to come out! How is this? The son of

God, is with them. . . . If God is the same to-day that He was then, He will do something for me, if I am willing to endure pain and shame for Him. . . . Steadfastness in trial strikes Satan on the cheek-bone."

Mr. Lethaby's journey from Jerusalem to Kerak on this occasion was a very memorable one. First of all, comes the Sitt's own memorandum of its chief incident:—

"I had word that my husband was returning from Jerusalem, and had also discovered, through our young friends, that Semaine Mujelli intended to waylay the returning traveller and his escort. So I was enabled, the next morning, to slip down into the gardens, and risking meeting these folk, get into the road from the North, where I met Ibrahim Nazareth, who had brought a horse for me to ride, and his mule for himself. Thus, before the school assembled, I was well out of sight of Kerak, and managed to get off. Ibrahim and I reached Medeba the second day, having stayed in a tent the first night. But we were then utterly unable to leave, on account of a storm, which lasted the whole day. So Khalil Sunaar persuaded me to remain at least until the morning.

"Think of my consternation, about four in the afternoon, when, looking out at the door of Khalil's house towards Nebo, I saw two Englishmen riding up the hill. They were apparent strangers to me. But somehow, the elder traveller seemed familiar, and I addressed him instinctively by the name my husband and I always used to him. It proved to be he. The master of the house, without hesitation, offered full hospitality to the soaked travellers. The elder man then said to me, 'Oh! are you

Mrs. Lethaby? Well, your husband is coming on behind; he will be here in an hour or two. We thought we had better push on!' This was so entirely unexpected that I flashed out indignantly: 'You call yourselves Englishmen, and leave your fellow traveller in such a storm, and he, frail and unequal to this most terrible part of the journey!' Khowadja Khalil Sunaar was all care. I was going on at once to meet my husband, but he would not hear of it. His son and servant went on, and in about an hour, they returned, and had to lift from his mule a frail, chilled, and sodden man, too exhausted to speak. But it was a mercy I was there. Khalil was the true Arab gentleman and brother. He at once got warm rugs and furs, and as I sat by my husband, rubbing his cold, half-dead hands, he came to himself, and could take a sip of coffee and say, 'Thank God *you* are here.' Early next morning our two fellow travellers, who wished to see Kerak, accompanied us: and thus we journeyed on, my husband once or twice so nearly collapsing that he said to me, 'I don't think I shall reach Kerak *this time!*' But he did. And when once safely in our house, and his (then) perils over, most light-heartedly told our good friend, Muallim Khusus, of his adventures and enjoyments."

The visit to England had been greatly encouraging in most respects, except that the man himself had taken insufficient rest, and the helpers were not yet forthcoming. So the little trio had still a great demand on their courage, hope, and confidence, as 1890 closed.

"In the extreme distance, at least ten miles away, lay the Lake Salghal, glittering white in the sun; and the whole space between it and where we stood seemed occupied. . . We estimated the whole number of tents at twenty thousand, and of camels at one hundred and fifty thousand. At this sight I felt an emotion of awe as when one first sees the sea."

LADY ANN BLOUNT.

CHAPTER VII

Sanguine Hopes. New Colleagues.

1891

MR. LETHABY, with the eye of a seer and the heart of an apostle, beheld this floating Bedawin population, and the myriads they represented, and with a soul throbbing in sympathy with his Master's, "had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd."

But it was difficult enough to feed the few, how should he feed the many? But he listens still for the Chief Shepherd's Voice, and hears Him say, as of old, "Bring the loaves hither to Me. . . Give ye them to eat."

On New Year's Day, at five in the morning, he was sitting by his lamp writing to I.E.P. :—

"Let me show fruits meet for repentance by giving you 'a happy New Year' as the first occupation for 1891.

I have been lying awake, and getting in and out of our coverlets, to put pans and pots in a dozen places to catch the rainfall, *inside* our house.

"We indeed thank God that the Moabites have not made an earthly end of us in 1890, and that, by His grace, we are going in for another innings.

"Do not think me too jocular, for most of it has been knocked out of us. . . . One day, two days, *the* Sheikh of Kerak was in the house—threatening, spying, begging. Presently his powerful rival came too, and talked blarney. But he sent a message afterwards that I did not know how to treat him with respect; that when a Sheikh such as he shook hands he should never find it empty. In a few days came another message, requesting that I would *lend* him £10, and announcing that, if we do not give him money, he will steal the landlord's horse.

"Would you not be thankful to compound for all this by a police rate! And must not the Turk be really 'unspeakable,' when we say: 'Bad as this is, yet from the Turk, good Lord deliver us?'

"But I am getting too cold, and my eyes are dim. When you get up in four hours from this time, may your roof be sound, your egg well boiled, your toast nicely buttered, and your soul in perfect peace! And this an augury for the year."

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Many days intervened before the letter was finished. Meanwhile there are daily notes showing what a time of stress it was. On January 14th he was able to continue:—

"This is my first opportunity. Miss Arnold is going to Jerusalem in preference to nearer Easter, when the Holy City is too much like 'Vanity Fair.' Our work here is more arduous than it was, and the devil

compliments us by worrying unceasingly. On Monday I started twelve Christian boys learning English, *i.e.*, the New Testament. While some of our Moslem boys have 'returned to their vomit,' two others have come and are learning to read Matt. xi. 28-30."

But there was a letter of cheer already somewhere on the road from England, under date 6th January :—

"We are praying for a good year for you. The last was a year of progress in finance. I can report the treasury full to repletion—about £490 having come in for Moab. Last year a Bank of England note for £100 came on the 30th December from a friend at Chapel-en-le-Frith. . . We are, however, deeply concerned about your health and the grave outlook."

The depressing diary jottings of these weeks unmistakably show that there was a very real foundation for anxiety. The weather was as bad as it could be, and its effect was greatly exaggerated by the abominable condition of the house, with which they were all the time battling. The most painful thing of all was the defection of several of the boys of whom they had great hopes. These difficulties had to be borne at the same time as neuralgia and great personal weakness, with days full of work and perpetually recurring attacks from the very people whom they came to benefit.

Unfortunately there is little during these wearing weeks to break the monotony of mental and physical torture.

Occasional gleams of sunshine pierce the overcast

of cloud; such were recurring compensations. Mrs. Wiseman had sent another £30, the annual grant for the lady worker, who was proving so great a treasure.

In February there were tidings from London that two of the persons whom Mr. Lethaby had interviewed, during his visit to England, had afresh offered themselves for Kerak, and had been accepted by the "Council." This was good news. But it would require three or four months or more to adjust their affairs, and to have such special training, especially in simple medical study, as would better fit them for the work to which they were giving themselves.

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Once again "Kerak" writes to "London":—

"April 23rd. The day before yesterday, just as the sun rose, Miss Arnold appeared at the gate, much to our surprise and gladness, and without any preintimation. She must tell you her own tale, but will, I am sure, not give you any idea of her tact and boldness in coming as she did. . . .

"We do not know when we may expect Mr. and Mrs. Forder, but we will make what preparation we can for their comfort and welfare. We have the 46th Psalm, thank God, 'therefore will not we fear.' A special blessing has been the wonderful health and strength given to my wife. She has been able to 'meet the enemy in the gate.' Our deepest sorrow since March 2nd has been the withdrawal of our best scholars, and the putting them under a Moslem 'Keteeb!' Their subsequent conduct—stone-throwing, lying, &c., is as great a surprise

as a grief. I never saw such proof of the devil's personal power and presence.

“Here, in a garden of figs and pomegranites by the side of the little river in the Wady” says the Sitt, “I write: It is a feast of the Greek Church, and two of our English reading boys have come here with Mr. L. and myself for a tiny picnic.

“Yesterday, the Greek Easter, we were favoured with a visit from our ruling Sheikh; and as, of course, he wanted money to buy coffee for the feast of ‘Bairam’—(next Saturday closes ‘Ramadam’), we took the opportunity of settling a few matters. . . . By his signed document, we are ‘to live in peace.’ But Arab promises are not made to be kept. . . . Will they ever love and practice *truth*?

“A Moslem who last Sunday said he would put a bullet through Mr. L., has brought on his shoulders his son, who has met with an accident, and is now lying in our porch. The boy was one of our first scholars.”

But Miss Arnold has yet to tell her own thrilling story of the journey from El Khuds:—

“God has given just enough strength to Mr. and Mrs. L. to hold on. Three months ago, the six (now) ‘possessed’ boys who have just left us, came to the Wady to see me off with tears and promises. . . . But I must not dwell on this, except to beg your prayers for them.

“I left Jerusalem, the morning of the 16th, on a donkey, the boxes being on two camels and a supplementary donkey. The morning star saw us the next day start from Jericho, reaching the place at six, where the bridge used to be. They have fixed up a big square flat-

bottomed boat which is pulled across as a ferry. While watching the process from the bank, I was startled by my name being called in English from the other side by a lady on horseback. Then Mr. Gray-Hill rode up. It was a most providential meeting. With them was the Sheikh of the Adwan, and they insisted upon giving him up, and paying him a napoleon to go with me to Medeba. Wasn't it good of them? They made me promise I would not leave Medeba except with a large 'Koffel.'

"A little way from the Jordan we came to a veritable slough of despond,—nasty greeny-black water and slush. The animals refused to enter, and I quite sympathised with them. Before I had time to think, one of the men, a young giant of a Moslem, whipped me up in his arms, tucked up his clothes, and began to carry me through. All of a sudden down went one of his legs,—down, down, down. He staggered and slipped, but held me up nearly on his shoulders, and finally just managed to regain his balance. . . . I was very thankful, as I quite expected we should fall together, and have an unwelcome ducking in this filthy quagmire. Although inwardly resolved not to shout, I did not relish the idea of eating and drinking that compound.

"At sundown when we reached Medeba, a 'lahaf' was arranged for me in true Eastern fashion; but how clumsily I managed to pay back their compliments when they wished to make me coffee! But I accepted tea gratefully, and then how they talked!

"On Monday morning we were off by six, and at seven got to some Christian tents, when our company increased from five to forty—to say nothing of loose donkeys. My sun-hat was tied up in a pillow-case and slung over the mule's back; and I had on a long black '*abbah*' and a dark blue '*mendile*' over my head, so as to be disguised from the Hameideh, whose country we were to pass

through in the broad daylight. A little further on we came to one of their camps, and took with us one of their Sheikhs as a safeguard and guide through the Mojib—eight hours from Kerak, the top of which we reached half an hour before sundown. My man Salami had lost a donkey in Mojib, so had to go back for it; the rest of us waited, and the men lighted a fire round which we all gathered. As a pastime they gave us a Bedawin dance with clapping and singing. It was most weird by the light of the newly risen moon and the dying embers of the fire.

At seven next morning, I was getting the three mules loaded up, and my own ready for riding, when up came Salami. So we set off, and on the way passed several camps of tents, and at each dropped some of our fellow travellers.

“At 10.30 p.m. we were glad to dismount and unload, for rest at Kasr, the ruins of an old castle, which I explored alone by the bright light of the moon. The stones are immense; and I was especially struck with the section of the pillars, 2 to 3 ft. in diameter, strewn in every direction. The men lighted a fire, coiled themselves up around it, and in five minutes were all asleep. The dew was very heavy, so you may guess I did not let them sleep long.

“Soon after midnight I caught my own mule again, saddled him up, and then began the business of waking the men. Poor fellows, they were very tired, for we had been going continuously for eighteen hours, and both Moslems and Christians were fasting. After some pushing, pulling, calling, and telling them in their own way ‘*dinier thoror*’ (the world is noon) they roused at last, and loaded up. By the time we got to Rabbah (‘Ar of Moab’) another donkey was missing, so back went Salami again,

“The men had hardly dismounted and were asleep, when a fellow driving a cow came along. This was extraordinary ; so standing on the other side of the mule, and, as I thought, effectively disguised, I listened very attentively to the few words he had with the only one of our party who was awake beside myself. I heard quite enough to arouse me to immediate action. He was a Mujelli servant, and was then going straight to their tents, which were only a few hundred yards away. This meant that in a quarter of an hour, all the Mujellis would know that I was coming through with three loaded mules.

“Not heeding the remonstrance of some of our men, whom I had roused, I left my riding mule, and with an umbrella for a stick, drove on the three others. Just then the moon set, and the morning star peeped out. I was desperate, as I knew how short the time was before the sun would rise. How devoutly I prayed that I might reach Kerak before the unwelcome sunlight revealed my presence. Oh ! it *was* dark, but I was very thankful ; although I nearly fell several times over rocks and stones in the road whilst playing my new role of muleteer. Do you think those three animals would keep together ? Not a bit of it. But I succeeded in getting them to the mountain facing Kerak, with the Wady only between us and our goal, by the grey dawn.

“One of the men now caught me up and besought that I would *ride* into Kerak. He even held my arm in his earnestness. He did not want the people to see me driving the mules. But I told him he had yet to learn that when an Englishwoman *said* a thing, she *meant* it ; at which he used a not very pious ejaculation. However, at the bottom of the Wady, I left him to bring on the animals, and I came up a shorter way to announce our safe arrival. As I reached our house the sun rose. I *did* have a warm welcome ! And we were thankful that God

had brought the boxes and me through the lion's den safely."

As the summer advanced, darker days seemed to gather and perplexity deepened. The young people, considering their utter ignorance, were easily and quickly taught; but there was terrible difficulty in holding them without parental influence or "inspectors" or "visitors." Yet while these workers had but lately come, the Latin school-master had been obliged to leave the place, following his priest, who a year before gave up the contest. Now, in pretence or otherwise, the house rented by them was offered to the Lethabys.

Such was "life" to these dear people. No wonder if "hope deferred" had made the "heart sick." But the prospect brightened, and a new lease of life was promised, when they heard that Mr. and Mrs. Forder had taken passage by the *Khedive* from London on September 3rd for Port Said, to join them.

Major-Gen. Haig still confidently looked to Kerak as the potential first outpost to a much larger work. "It is impossible not to see," he says, "that in the natural course of things Kerak must ultimately be the base for an onward move in a south-easterly direction to the great Arab States of Jebel Shomer, with its population of half a million, including the Jowf; and to Kaseem with Nejd, which, according to Palgrave, number 1,300,000 more. It may be that a church shall

be raised up, even in wild, lawless Kerak, from which the Word of God shall sound forth into all that dark region, and some of Lethaby's boys yet become the heralds of salvation to their countrymen in the hitherto almost inaccessible centre of the great peninsula." Such a possibility—such a hope—was surely worth much sacrifice—much enthusiasm.

It was now Mr. Lethaby's business, with the Sitt, to go to Jerusalem to meet their anticipated colleagues; Miss Arnold remaining working and watching. A bargain was struck for three men and two mules; but the next day Saleh came to say they were all afraid. At length, however, they had the courage to start, reached the Mujelli tents before sunset, and were, on the whole, decently treated. Khalil and others even asked for a tent-school. But early the next day they were "fooled with and bullied by Bedr Mujelli," who, with Daoud, followed them. Much exhausted, they reached the top of Mojib before sunset; and by pushing on through the night amid imaginary scares, found themselves in favourable surroundings at Medeba by four in the morning.

This rapid progress was too much for them, and Lethaby sat all day in the Khalil house in great pain, and the night gave little respite. But during the enforced stay they were witnesses of Nejme's destroyed houses, which had been recently ransacked by Ali and the Turks.

On the way to Jericho, the husband was severely kicked by a mule; but, in spite of the accident, Saturday found them in Jerusalem. The Sunday which followed in El Khuds was declared "the best Sabbath for many a day."

The departure of the Forders had been unavoidably delayed, so that the sojourn in the Holy City was fortunately lengthened. Thence the Sitt wrote :—

"Sept. 5th. Once more we are in dear old Jerusalem, in a quiet boarding-house, in the midst of vineyards, outside the city wall. My husband was not fit to travel alone, or would have done so. The city is now in its ordinary state—no tourists; and as we know so well all the old haunts, *not* in the guide books, there is an unusual charm about it.

"Last Saturday, with an American lady, we went to visit the 'Friends' Mission,' at Ramallah, about eight miles away, on the North road. It is a quaker American Home, started by Eli and Sybil Jones. The simple worship at the little 'Meeting-House' was quite a treat: and the intervals of the day, spent in talk with the Christian natives, who came to welcome us, and joined in singing, led by a sweet-toned Estey organ, were wonderfully refreshing to jaded pilgrims.

"On the Monday, with a group of local and visiting friends, we went to *Bethel*. Passing a spring, from which, in all likelihood, Jacob drank, we mounted the ruin on the top of the hill, and took in the glorious view away to the East and South, including the mountains of Moab, beyond the green band of the Jordan. It added to our delight to sing on that spot, 'The God of Abraham, praise,' and 'O God of Bethel.'

"We made a *detour* in returning, passing through Beeroth, with its remains of an old Khan, where travellers to and from the North were wont to rest. The tradition is that here Mary became conscious that Jesus was not in the company. How we realised the hasty return over the stony road, past these olives and vineyards, and saw the anxious mother pushing her way through the streets to the Temple!"

W.L. supplements this pleasant gossiping :—

"Last Saturday till Tuesday was, to us, really a 'retreat,' at Ramallah. The house is delightfully cool, at the hottest. But the great attraction was the quiet, and the spirit which breathes over all. Among the active workers is a native Syrian, who, we are told, is a sort of converted 'Manasseh.' The other is a John Ploughman, who read and 'went round' John iii. . . .

"But Bethel is one of the most honoured and interesting spots in the land; and to see it *at leisure* was a treat which I shall be glad to repeat. Returning to Khuds, we came along the route so graphically 'flashed' by inspiration, in Isaiah x. 28-32.*

On the 16th of September, Mr. Lethaby had a pleasant half walk, half ride, to Jaffa, whence, next day, he got off by the boat for Port Said. He discovered his old friend, Canon Strange, on board, and with but few fellow passengers, and a fairly smooth sea, reached Port Said before sun-

* "The prophet in Vision, beholds the invader, Sennacherib, moving towards Jerusalem. He sees him, not following the ordinary route,—the great North road,—but striking across country in a line that is traversed by more than one deep ravine; hoping, by a forced march, to surprise Jerusalem."—Dr. KAY, in the Speaker's Commentary.

rise. First calling, of course, on W.H.T., he presently discovered those whom he had come to meet. They spent the Sunday together, and had the delight of a Communion service. Passports visèd, they boarded the *Senegal*, and with a beautiful evening and a calm night, were, before daylight, at Jaffa.

The succeeding days in Jerusalem were uneventful. Sunday, the 27th, was "busy and happy," and by Wednesday they were ready. Ali's camels and muleteers came before sunrise; but there was the usual 'altercation,' and they did not get off till nine. W.L., as was his wont, walked to the Khan, half way to Jericho; and at the Russian Hospice they found comfortable hospitality for the night.

Mr. Forder, who joins the circle with vision new to the Orient, is our narrator as far as Medeba:—

"About two the next morning we were again on the move, and at daybreak, our man, having stripped, proceeded to ford the Jordan. First he led Mr. and Mrs. L.'s camel over, then came back for us, and a second time for his two donkeys, which, of course, had to swim. Our packages he put on his head, as the water was quite up to his neck. But it was, altogether, a decidedly pretty picture in the early morning light. Then we had half an hour's rest, and fed on dry native bread,—a poor, but satisfying breakfast; after which we made for the mountains by a long, weary jolt over the plain, under the burning sun.

"At last, we began the ascent; up and down places that seemed impossible for us or the animals; on the

edge of steep precipices, over cliffs, and then on to a wide plain, where we were told we should soon rest for the night. But the hours came and went,—fifteen of them, and it was not till sunset that we were in sight of Medeba.

“With genuine gladness we entered the native house of the headman of the place, and lay our weary limbs on the ‘lahafs,’ which were spread for us. Then, in true Arab style, they killed two fowls and baked them, serving up half a fowl for each of us, with a large plate of boiled rice, and an unlimited supply of hot native bread. The visitors, who had come in to see us feed, were good enough to finish what was left. Coffee followed, in small cups, holding about a table-spoonful,—black and strong, with no sugar or milk. Then several men squatted on the ground round us, and continued to smoke and jabber until we all fell asleep. Innumerable fleas kept us industriously employed much of the night, but we had a passably good rest, in spite of them.”

“We were able to get away from Medeba,” says the Sitt, on Friday morning, to our great relief. But already the immense pile of luggage and heavy boxes had attracted attention.

“Before reaching Diban, we were startled at nine o’clock at night by an attack from Hameidah horsemen, with spears. They took off two mules and their loads; although for safety we had paid our Hameidah guide five medjidehs to go with us. He was successful in getting back the mules, after we had all waited in the starlight for two hours.

“Next day we had passed, once more, the laborious and tortuous Mojib Ghor, and had enjoyed, as we thought, a last meal before reaching home, when our hopes were cruelly dashed. Our Christian muleteers seemed bent on going right in upon twenty or more



Sheikh Khalil Sunaar on Sky-line.

THE GUEST TENT, MEDEBA.

armed Mujellis, each of whom seized either one of us or one of our animals. Our miserable guides were impotent in defence! only poor Ibrahim was faithful. I insisted on his keeping with Mrs. Forder.

"I recognised the faces of several of the men, and, holding the 'mendeles' aside, accused them of cruelty and treachery to us, their friends. Now each one of us was hurried and hustled off to a different tent. Some of the worst of the men tried their utmost to pull my sick husband off his mule, and otherwise insulted him.

"In the darkness, I was put first into the tent of Sheikh Theeb Mujelli, his son Mahmoud being my jailer. The wife wished me to sit down and not fear; they would get me coffee and bread. But I resolutely refused to sit down or eat until my husband was brought to me. After an hour or so, as I was kneeling and praying aloud that he might be brought, in he came, and we thanked God together for this mercy. Then we both refused the offered coffee and bread until they should assure us of the safety of our friends. At length we were taken to them. They were without semblance of fear, having eaten well of the hot bread and drank of the coffee provided. I was glad indeed they had been able to do so; as for ourselves, a sense of responsibility rather spoiled our peace.

"After long detention, with noisy talk about ransom, until midnight, we were reluctantly obliged to lie down on a Mujelli 'lehaf,' and try to sleep fitfully until Sunday, at dawn, still painfully conscious that, although within four hours of our home, we were prisoners.

"At last, the terms were, with much demur, assented to—sixty medjidehs as ransom, on being safely taken to our home by three of these mounted brigands! If we had refused, the boxes of Mr. Forder were to be broken open, and they would have *helped themselves*.

"We gathered together what we could find of our

chattels and started homewards. Within an hour a Mujelli of the Saleh family appeared. Those who had taken us prisoners were of the Khalil branch. Fortunately, the Khalil men were able to turn aside their rivals, and we were soon again on our way, catching up the mule which had left before us.

"I soon discovered that my clothing, with Mr. L.'s flannel shirts and socks and new alpaca coat, were gone, beside his little black bag, in which were our letters and a roll of fifty medjidehs to pay the muleteers, etc. The bag* had been cut open, and only *two* of the fifty medjidehs remained!

"These men are veritable wolves. Sheikh Saleh has demanded thirty-three medjidehs because the others of his family have taken forty-eight. He even threatened us with being either left to the mercy of the rabble, or turned next day root and branch out of the city. My husband objects, from principle, to giving through fear. But, for the sake of the others, who now have to be considered beside ourselves, he yielded the point, and none can blame him. The whole city is full of these men, and is in a chronic state of tumult, but not on our account. Wherever the Mujellis are, there is no peace.

"I hear my husband moaning in his pain and weakness. He is quite ill enough to cause alarm, and he feels that his work in Kerak has probably come to an end."

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Miss Arnold had been thoughtfully busy preparing for the reception of her old and new friends. There was a real, warm welcome for them.

* This was a handy brief-bag which had been very kindly given by a friend at Saltburn-on-Sea to Mr. Lethaby on his previous visit to England.

Mr. Forder was better able to take things stoically and hopefully. He says :—

“Now that we are in Kerak, thanks to Miss Arnold, we are more invitingly housed than we expected. We are next door to Mr. Lethaby. It is one large room, like theirs, but comfortable. Miss Arnold had settled all with the landlord, and got him to clean it up for us. Over our porch, on the whitewash she had inscribed ‘Welcome Home!’ and on the walls inside the solace ‘The Lord bless thee and keep thee.’ We find that she had a very trying time whilst Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby were away, one man having threatened, over and over again, to cut her throat; but she braved all danger. . . .

“I have helped each morning with the sick people, and on Wednesday rode out to an encampment, where I gave medicine to more than forty people, and very thankful they were. . . . The boys in the school are such nice little fellows.”

Early in September, the Secretary to the Council had written suggesting furlough to the older workers within three months from the arrival of their new colleagues, or sooner, if the interests of the Mission should allow of it. This was a kind and reasonable proposal, but the Lethabys could not, for the moment, see their way to its realisation, chiefly on account of the husband's very critical condition.

There was much during the closing months of the year akin to the “burden” of the earlier months. But the rainbow of hope persistently spanned the sky. Miss Arnold, on the 5th November, says :—

"Thank God, in answer to earnest and unceasing prayer, Mr. L. is now somewhat better—able to be about—but that is all. The M.'s have come very near to killing him this time. Last Monday week, when he was just up and reclining in Mrs. L.'s chair, in a fearfully weak condition, six of the biggest villains burst in upon us, forcibly pushed me aside from the gate and door, and, entering the house, set themselves down in a row and began three hours of talking and threatening. These were the Khalils, who had already stolen forty-eight medjidehs out in the tents, and many articles of clothing. I thought the hours would never end. Then some of them began to walk round and inspect. They resolutely settled on the Sitt's tin box of clothing, all our lehafs, etc. In the disturbance on their first entrance I had managed to slip my little clock into my pocket."

The human earthquake once more ceased its upheavals. That same evening cheering letters came from England, and before retiring to their "mustabas," the whole group sang exultantly, Jackson's "Te Deum." A fortnight later the diary records:—

"A very high temperature. Obligated to keep to bed till sunset. Miss A. also off work, worse than I. Mr. Sykes, of the C.M.S., came with Dr. Wilson at 8. They prescribe quinine, and it only. I am obliged to decline so drastic a course. Much devolves on my wife." And on the 21st:—"I am disposed to leave on Monday with Mr. Sykes, but Miss A. does not improve." Later:—"I give up hope, which is also dashed by Sheikhs Saleh and Khalil being told of my project."

The next day's Sabbath calm helped much, and the fever abated. Although there were some



KERAKI DISCUSSING DIVISION OF SPOIL.

disquieting happenings, the evening closed with the communion, and was followed by a good night's rest. In the morning Salim Sunaar and Mr. Sykes came to terms as to the journey, and talked over a possible yearly payment. It was a very knotty question. Altogether circumstances were shaping for Mr. Lethaby to accompany Mr. Sykes and the Doctor.

So at eleven on Tuesday, he, accoutred, and with portmanteau hastily packed, set out for El Khuds and England. He walked slowly to the bottom of the Ghor, and then rode up with increasing confidence. The party reached the Hallasa tents in the Belka with a fair amount of comfort. After a good night's rest, which Lethaby gladly welcomed as an augury, they passed through the toilsome Mojib, and at Aroer joined the Hameideh tents. He found them a "sad, poor lot," and the night contrasted with the previous one. There was much sickness among the tent people, and he himself could not boast.

In the morning they did not move till late, and the Wali road was difficult; but they reached Medeba at 3.30. The table was spread with comfort, a pleasant evening followed, and then came the great restorative, sleep. Mr. Sykes, whose destination was Salt, very considerably offered to accompany his weakened friend to the Jordan, which they reached in good time on the Friday, and by a cheery fire, slept in the open on the eastern bank.

They crossed to the western side on Saturday, but were now harassed by quarantine regulations, which continued for many days. No tent was available till Tuesday, and it can hardly be a matter of surprise that nights of unhealthy environment, and a daily afternoon fumigation, with a deficiency of food supply, told unfavourably.

The Sabbath calm came in due course. "We read much of the Liturgy," he says. "Saleh took the lessons in Arabic. Ungar sent us some bread. But we are still sleeping on the ground with as big a fire as we can keep up. 'Lehaf' soaked, yet better in health all day."

The tedious week passed, but it was not until the Friday that orders came to withdraw to Jericho. Then came the difficult and fatiguing process of tent striking, mule loading, and the re-pitching "on a dunghill" at Jericho. For the third Sunday of forced inactivity he records:—"Disquieted as to some backward move; but prayer is answered and we have a quiet day and good time for thought. Read the morning service as last Sunday, and in the afternoon New Testament allusions to Jericho. Provisions from the hotel were offered."

On the Monday they broke away. Before reaching the Apostles' Fountain, however, a fearful hurricane almost drove them back. Eventually, all obstacles overcome, they reached Mrs. R.'s at Jerusalem.

Almost as a matter of course, attacks of

intermittent fever returned. The first Sunday in Jerusalem he "shivered for a great part of the service at Church, and for two hours had to lie down." But "at night a good long sleep" came to his help.

During the following week he was greatly disturbed, as he had no tidings of his travelling companion Saleh, and had no certainty how to get letters to his wife. The three weeks' delay at the Jordan had upset all reckonings, and it was nearly *seven weeks* from the time of their leaving Kerak before the anxious spouse, on the return of Saleh, had any real knowledge of how things were going.

There is a delightful little incident—an oasis in this sterile time, which is a very Elim in the memory.

"Early one morning," she says, "before dawn, I was startled by a knocking at the door. I recognised a childish voice—'Ya, Sitt Lethaby!' I called out 'Jeradi, is anyone ill?' I at once opened the door to the little lad of nine or ten, and let him tell his tale. 'This night while I was sleeping, Saleh came from Jerusalem, and fastened his mule at my father's door. Then he lay down by the fire and began to tell 'Abbi' that he left Khowadja Lethaby in Jerusalem a month ago. That Khowadja gave Saleh stores and letters, and say to him, 'Go back quickly to the Sitt, and you shall have a present over your wages.' Then said Saleh, 'As I am coming I meet a relative going to Nazareth. He say to me, come with me, then, after, go to Kerak. And so I am longer in coming back.' My father say, 'How is the Khowadja, he was ill when he go away?' 'Oh, he

better and go on to England, and after '*fatoor*' (break-fast) I go and tell Sitt all the news.'

"Jeradi said, 'when I hear him say all this, I slip out of the house over the roof, and come to tell you.' . . . 'Jeradi,' I said, 'God bless you!' He replied, 'I am so glad to lighten your heart.' He and the other boys had for many mornings joined hands, and prayed for protection and blessing on their good Khowadja Lethaby, 'Our dear master!' I told Jeradi to run home and get warm and sleep well, till school time; and we would have a happy day now.

"I heard afterwards from Ahmed, Jeradi's friend, that the little lad went from me to his playfellow Ahmed, and rousing him from sleep said '*kumi*' (rise) 'ya! Ahmed; I am so happy: the Sitt will now rejoice; I have taken good news to her.' Ahmed, unwillingly, joined his boy friend in saying, first the Lord's Prayer, '*Abana illazi &c.*'; then in English, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.' But Jeradi was not yet satisfied; his little heart was so full of thanksgiving, so he said to Ahmed,—'The Khowadja always finish our *happy days*' (*i.e.*, the Queen's birthday, our own, and the festivals of the year) 'like this'! Then he held up his hand reverently *to God*, 'Hip, hip, hurrah'! Leaving Ahmed to finish his broken sleep, Jeradi slipt away and crept into his own house, and repeated his glad thanksgiving. He did not say a word of what he had done, or where he had been. I need not say that the school day was a festival of gladness, when the man Saleh came and confirmed the news; and I opened my letters, so long delayed, to find that all was well and my husband safe. Jeradi's was, indeed, a spontaneous act of sweet chivalry, and recognition of Divine care. The dear boy! My little Arab cavalier!"

The further stay in Jerusalem was marked by most unfavourable weather. On the 22nd December, Lethaby, after an early breakfast, walked to Bethlehem in bright sunshine, but the four succeeding days brought a "deluging rain," followed by snow and "inches of slush."

But he was beginning to feel equal to his long journey. His friend Mr. Clark suggested that he should go viâ Smyrna, the Piræus, and Odessa, which, after due consideration, he decided on. But it was not until the New Year dawned that he was able to leave.



**“Uncomplaining, though with care grown hoary,
I desire to wear no crown of glory,
Where my Saviour wore a crown of thorn.
Not in paths of roses would I dally,
Where my Saviour trod the gloomy valley,
When He suffered bitter pain and scorn.”**

C. J. SPITTA.

CHAPTER VIII

In Camp. Changing the Base. 1892

WHEN Mr. Lethaby turned from the Holy City, it was the prelude to a much longer absence than he then contemplated. The *Lazaroff*, in which he booked for the Piræus and Odessa, lay in the offing at Jaffa, and late in the evening of the day of sailing, Cyprus was just visible on the horizon. Thursday was untoward, but the ship had, almost all day, land in view; passing Rhodes in the afternoon and Scio in the evening. Chios was sighted in the clear early forenoon of Friday, and Smyrna reached at four. Here he was on familiar ground. A run to Ephesus with two fellow voyagers proved a day of great interest, and he was already giving evidence of improved health under the new conditions, with freedom from the immediate perplexities of Kerak.

The Sunday was spent on board, and a service was extemporised at which he spoke. On Tuesday



AMONG THE RUINS AT EPHESUS.

a captivating run westward among the pleasant islands of the Grecian Archipelago brought them at sunset to the Piræus, where they lay at anchor during a brilliant moonlight night.

Wednesday, the 13th,—with “Mars’ Hill” and the Apostle Paul much in memory, was given to the delights of the Acropolis, Areopagus, and the temple of Theseus. Then they anchored in the spacious bay of Salonika; and a deliciously clear day succeeded as they passed in sight of the snow-capped Olympus and Ossa, and the “weird scenery” of Athos.

By 9.30 on the morning of the 16th, they “asked leave” at the fort of the Dardanelles to enter the Sea of Marmora, and later, in spite of a terrible downpour, Lethaby and the ship’s doctor, amid “dirt and dogs,” traversed much of the City of Constantinople.

Many miles in the Bosphorus and the Black Sea intervened, until Odessa Harbour was made in the midst of ice and biting cold. Only a hasty look at the town was possible, which included a call at the depôt of the Bible Society.

Having decided to take the Berlin and Beerhaven route to Southampton, with endorsed passport, he set out on a long snow-mantled night ride, viâ Lemberg and Cracow, pulling up at the Prussian frontier for “douane” at midnight. The Sunday was spent in Berlin. Our friend had the faculty for discovering Christian folk, and among them found delightful rest and fellowship.

The journey was continued prosperously, and he was with his family at Sidmouth in the early evening of Thursday. The quiet of that charming seaport was surely the best place in the world for the weary man, and he was counselled to "vegetate" as much as his nature would allow him.

The prevalence of "influenza" was urged as "a further reason why you should hide yourself until the evil be overpast. Let your courage be shown by your waiting on God, on nature, and on kindly nursing."

By February 5th he was in London meeting the friends of the mission, from whom he received assurances of deep and sincere sympathy and affection. There was a suggestion that Miss Bowyer, who had been an active worker in Palestine, had kept up her Arabic, and was now in England, should join the Kerak group. And this was fortunately arranged at an early crisis.

In consequence of Saleh's egregious failure, the Sitt was obliged to go herself to Jerusalem, with the expense and disagreeables of seven days' quarantine on the banks of the Jordan. Only a week was given to El Khuds, each day of which, except Sunday, was full of wearying work of buying and packing.

On the homeward journey, at the old quarantine quarters at the ferry, they had to wait till sunrise before the men would take them over, and quite a hundred men and animals loaded with wheat, etc.,

from Salt and the Belka, were waiting from midnight to get across.

From Saleem Sunaar's house at Medeba, on Sunday morning, February 4th, just after sunrise, the Sitt wrote :—

“ I think I never felt so homesick for you and England, as I do. each hour I get nearer our fastness. To be obliged to remain in Kerak when you need me so much, seems a strange duty.

“ I fear that your desire for work may lead you to lose the atom of strength you have gained. There is a new Greek priest just come to Medeba from Beit Jala, so you can see the line of influence. Before sunrise, I did my toilet outside, in Saleem's courtyard, which, you will remember, with a perfect tessalated pavement of Roman times. Now I have been left alone, while all the family and visitors have gone to church. I am hoping to get to Mary and the rest of them by my birthday, on Tuesday, 16th, and for the advent of a ‘little stranger,’ expected by the F.'s. I had four really nice letters from Harab. Achmed, Abd el Maty, and Mahomed Nablous. The latter is to be altogether with us to help, at a medjideh a month.”

It is a pleasing novelty for Miss Arnold to speak of the Mujellis as apparently very friendly.

“ In fact,” she says, “ last Friday, we had to call in one of the sons of Sheikh Khalil, as a foil to our own landlord and his son. As I was returning from the river the other week, the son, to whom Mr. L. had been like a father, and had taught him English, hurled great stones from the mountain top on me. I was obliged to hide under a shelf of rock until the missiles came less thickly. . . At the city wall, I saw him, and he cursed me

dreadfully. The calling in of Derweesh Mujelli, although it cost me half a lira, brought the landlord and his son to their knees. The final outcome was that the boy thoroughly repented, as did the father, and they made all the atonement they could. As a peace offering, and a token of his repentance, and my forgiveness, he killed and presented me with a fowl.

"19th. I have a little quiet time, with my cat, 'Budgie,' sitting on my arm: so I write to you." (Later) "My quiet hour went in doctoring women and children. . . . Never mind, we are thankful that God keeps our hands full. During the month of December, I find we attended to 454 patients, and have had a proportionate number since."

Towards the middle of March, things were so adjusted that the Sitt felt free to leave. They slept in Mojib the first night, and at the Hallassa tents the next. Saleh Khusus and his brother were with the "Koffel,"—a great number of men, women, and children going to Main. The Sitt was specially glad to meet the little Mohamed Nablous on the mountain side with his flock.

On reaching Jerusalem she found herself much run down by a six days' waiting at Medeba, and could only do what was imperative. The homeward journey was broken at Port Said, where, at W.H.T.'s request, successful meetings were held with the crews of the Welsh Colliers and of H.M.S. *Melita*.

During these weeks, Mr. Lethaby had much trouble with his eyes, but his general health was

improving. He walked constantly, and travelled freely to visit his friends and to speak of his work.

Somersetshire and Devonshire came first ; then the Midlands ; then Bath and Cornwall ; and so the days sped.

Among the gifts of the year to the treasury was a prized legacy of £94 8s. to ' Lethaby's Palestine Mission,' from the late Mrs. W. M. Bunting, of Highgate.

The multiplication of correspondents and correspondence began somewhat to complicate the conditions of management of the little mission, both in England and in Moab, and it was a continual prayer that abundant wisdom to direct might be given. The thirteenth of first Corinthians was much in requisition.

At Kerak, before Mrs. Lethaby left, Mrs. Forder had a severe illness, from which she seemed well on the way to recovery, and was even getting out in the sunshine. A relapse was followed by a second recovery, so satisfactory, that there was a talk of a possible recuperative journey to Jerusalem. But this was not to be. During the first week in May, a sudden and more severe seizure quickly terminated fatally. Miss Arnold wrote :—

" Exactly at noon her gentle spirit went to rest. I could not, I would not, believe it. . . Our friends around were thunderstruck. . . Mr. F. completely broke down. . . I made all necessary arrangements,

as we determined the funeral should not be until the morning, and that, contrary to local habit, she should have some kind of a coffin. Our landlord and another made it from our packing cases, to the best of their ability, and I lined it with blue sateen. I tried to buy a piece of the garden attached to the church, but it cannot be sold, as it is church property. So we are to have a piece in the middle of the Christian burial ground, and I will have it walled and roofed in."

The letter conveying the tidings to England of Mrs. Forder's death was received by the "Council," just before the arrival of the Sitt, but she was in time to join in a tender message of condolence to the bereaved and sadly reduced mission company.

On the 25th May, the Sitt wrote to Miss Arnold:—

"We have this day sent off Miss Bowyer to you, by s.s. *Valetta*. I only landed yesterday at Harwich, and my dear husband broke the distressing tidings to me. There had to be prompt action. She will try to get, without a day's delay, right on to Medeba, and if possible, to Kerak, before you can know of it. I can only praise our God for giving you strength to perform the last acts of loving care for the dear sleeping one."

A week later, W.L. added:—"It is not yet half-past five in the morning. . . A week yesterday, Mrs. L. knew nothing of what had happened; and in the week, how very much has transpired, so that we hope this will get to you by the hands of Miss Bowyer herself. . .

"In her coming, we see the hand of Providence. It will be a blessed thing if, at 'the end of all things,' we

can see that we have never lost the track of the Divine Will. Do not adopt any new departure without very clear light *from above*, not merely from within. . . Miss B. will, I hope, bring safely your three part Arabic Bible."

In July, Mr. Gray-Hill had been invited to preside at a meeting in Liverpool in the interests of the Moab Mission. He was unable to attend, but wrote :—

"I greatly honour heroic courage and devotion wherever I see them ; and I most firmly believe that the living of gentle, pure, and unselfish lives, such as those which our friends have led, amidst surroundings of ignorance, malice, and violence, of which it is difficult for educated, honest, and peaceable Englishmen to conceive, must have an effect beneficial in the highest degree.

"Many years may elapse before the reckless, false, and grasping men, amongst whom these good missionaries labour, can even understand the motives which induce them to submit to insult, threats, and robbery, rather than abandon their post, and can recognise that the desire to benefit those around them is, in truth, the sole motive of their action. But this will become apparent at last, and the young children coming under their influence will, I believe, gradually change the feelings and shortly improve the condition of the place."

Miss Bowyer reached Jerusalem June 13th, and was met by Miss Arnold at Medeba. After Mojib, one of the young Mujelli Sheikhs, to whom Mr. Forder had given surgical help, met the lady travellers.

"After courteously greeting Miss Arnold and myself," says Miss B., "he wished us to go to his tent, himself escorting us. Arrived there, we were treated as distinguished guests, coffee was promptly made, and a kid killed in our honour. . . At supper, choice morsels were brought to us, after which we laid down and slept till dawn.

"So it came to pass that I entered Kerak peaceably and without the loss of a pin's worth. . . Presents have been coming in honour of the '*Sitt jadeel*' (new lady), among them thirty eggs, a couple of fowls, some beautiful tomatoes, beside grapes and cucumbers. So you see the people bear us some good-will."

Miss Arnold continued her work on the whole hopefully. In June she writes:—

"I know that the boys are an interesting theme to all of us. Bless their hearts! Salem Sunaar brought back little Kolloff from the tents to-day. . . He is to sleep in Mr. Forder's house and take his meals here. He was telling us this evening how, in the tents, he repeated and explained to the people the Psalms he knows."

This little boy Kolloff, one of the youngest boys, had both father and uncle cruelly murdered a few miles south of Kerak in the previous January, on their way home with mules and donkeys laden with olive oil, from Khanazera. Mrs. Lethaby offered at once to take Kolloff, and the child found his way from the tents with a woman, walking the whole way. His father's only remaining brother took the whole possessions of the dead father, and the little lad had to return to him.

"Yesterday, Abd-el-Maty returned after an absence of five weeks. His father had put him down a well to bring up his sword, which had fallen in, and the boy had been ill with fever ever since. When he returned he was more like a creature of the wilderness than a boy. Thank God he is all right now.

"Harab has been a trouble to us. He had beaten and cursed his mother. I made him ask her forgiveness and kiss her hand. He has been quite a good boy since.

"The Greek schoolmaster is kindness itself to us. Jeradi and seven others come regularly, and there is a new boy whose father is a soldier in the Hajj. Mohamed and Achmed Nablous have been to see us several times."

Some of these lads, who were the first to whom Mr. Lethaby taught English, wrote at this time to their friends in England. We may give one letter from Saleh and Musa—two intelligent young fellows, of whom we have already heard more than once:—

"*Kerak, Moab.* Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby. We hope you are well, and we pray the Lord to help you, and keep you, and bring you back to Kerak safe. We are very happy to send you this little letter and to tell you the news of Kerak. The Skour came to fight the Keraki, and to take their cattle. The Keraki were few, and the Skour were very many, and they kill a man of Kerak, and the Keraki kill of the Skour two horses. Then they cried to the Mujellis, and they ride their horses, and took their weapons, and followed them near Khatranza, and they fight very much, and the Skour kill four Mujellis. These were Derweesh and Saleh, sons of Sheikh Khalil, and Mohamed, the son of Sheikh Faris, and one other,

and two Kerak men. The Mujellis wounded many of the Skour. That is the news.

"Now I am sending this letter to present my love to you and to your neighbours; and all our family send their love to you, and we hope God will bring you back safely to Kerak. Please send us a letter before you come, and tell us how you are. This is the writing of Saleh, because Musa is in the tents and asked me to write for him. Your friends,

SALEH IBN YUSUF KHASUS,
MUSA IBN ISA KHASUS.

P.S.—Our Master, Salami Khasus, sends his love to you."

At the end of June the Anglo-Kerakians found themselves—

"In a quaint old house in Colchester, in which Queen Bess is said to have stayed, though on a different business to ours. . . To-morrow afternoon we are to speak at the Bible-house, Victoria Street, to the London workers. . . Then we share a portion of the Southport Convention."

In the second half of July the writing room was the Wesleyan Conference, Bradford:—

"Scores of pens are going; hundreds of ministers and laymen all around, and Mr. Percy Bunting is making a speech. . . The day before we came to Bradford we had a capital B.S. meeting at Keswick. . . I am more than ever impressed that simplicity of aim—'this one thing I do,' is what we all need. . . It is just the souls and bodies of these Bedawin men and women, boys and girls in Kerak and the regions beyond, that we have to look after. . . And the less machinery in Moab or in England the better. If we are faithful to God every hour He will lead us on. . .

“How our thoughts are chastened as we think of the changes since we left Kerak—the men whom we have known so well, called away under such dreadful circumstances—Mrs. F.’s gentle life laid down—all claim Kerak for Christ.”

Again in October from London:—“When we return we do not know. Your particulars of the work all round are as gratifying as interesting. I am having lantern slides made with views of Kerak, &c. . . We cannot tell you of health and strength—of eyesight, particularly—as we could wish, but I hope there is a little more work for us to do. The interest and kindness shown by everyone is wonderful. . . We will both be back as soon as seems expedient, and in the way which, as we think and hope, will bring most glory to God.”

At the beginning of November there was a welcome at Greenthorne, and from other friends in the North of England. About the same time the “Council” received suggestions from Mr. F. at Kerak for a somewhat ambitious scheme of building, which did not, on the whole, commend itself to our friend. He felt sure it was still premature.

He was constantly suffering with his eyes, and was at length again persuaded to avail himself of specialist’s advice. There was immediate relief, and the optician gave comfort and help for long months afterward. The end of November and the beginning of December were given to Bath, the West of England, and “home”; and the week before Christmas brought them back to London.

To Miss Arnold, on 28th November, W.L. writes:—

“You will find that we are not idle as concerns the future any more than the present. . . . A step at a time is still the fastest way of getting on. . . . Be sure you will never be other than our first and greatest helper, no matter how greatly the work may grow. It is foggy, and my eyes are dim.

“I hope you will receive the gifts for the sixteen young people safely. They are from Bradford friends. Please write their names in Arabic. You will see our suggestions in pencil. I think they will give them pleasure.”

There was a “Council” meeting on the 16th of December, continued on the 22nd, to discuss how the mission could best be worked, and Mr. F.’s plans for building were considered. As we have read “between the lines,” it has been pretty evident that something new and of importance was imminent. During these months Lethaby had been reviving and recogitating the idea which he had often and long revolved in his mind, and of which he has spoken more than once, of attempting to “prospect” some of the untouched regions of Arabia to the South of Kerak for missionary purposes. He saw himself approaching the familiar stronghold, from what he thought the best strategical point in the far South, and so working his way, little by little, back to Kerak by a Northerly tramp. His greatly increased knowledge of Arabic and of Arab life made the project a

feasible one to him ; and it may be imagined that, in spite of his physical frailty, to his sanguine temperament, it had great possibilities. Then, for the time being, Kerak itself seemed sufficiently "manned." What could be more attractive or hopeful. He would furnish himself with a good supply of Arabic Scriptures, and scatter the Holy Seed all the way.

This dream he discussed carefully with his "Council" ; and if they could not come to the idea with all the confidence and optimism of the Anglo-Moabite himself, they acquiesced hopefully in his fearless undertaking, bade him "God-speed," and resolved :—"That the 'Council' having learnt from Mr. Lethaby of his projected journey through Central Arabia, for the purpose of distributing God's Holy Word, places a sum at his disposal towards the cost of the journey, and earnestly commends him to the care and protection of Almighty God."

It was not everyone who could understand this insatiably eager brother. Those who knew him most intimately were confident of the purity of his motives, and, on the whole, in the strength and clarity of his judgment. They took due note, too, of the nervous irritability which had been sorely intensified by his lengthened distressful and unique experiences.

On the eve of his departure he received personal communications which were balm to his weary but still expectant spirit. The wife again consented

to a temporary separation. The plan was for their paths to converge at Kerak, if God should so will, at some moment in the coming year. When that might be could not be predicted with any certainty. But they would still "trust in God and keep their powder dry."





THE SUNAAR FAMILY. KERAK.

"Well dost thou seem to check my lingering here
On this important hour ;—I'll straight away."

ADDISON'S "CATO."

CHAPTER IX

The Persian Gulf. A Closed Door. 1893

MR. LETHABY spent the last hours of '92 in Liverpool, his brother accompanying him to his cabin in the *Arcadia*, bound for the East. But the ship's sailing was delayed, and he was able to join in the watchnight service at Cranmer Street. As the New Year dawned, with the Rev. S. Chadwick at his side, he finally went on board for his new venture.

With seasonable January weather, the vessel forged ahead. By the afternoon of the 4th she was off Finisterre, and in the early morning of the 7th Gibraltar was passed. At Algiers there was "a great influx of new life," but a caravan of animals taken on board did not add to the general comfort. The 12th found them at Malta, and on the 15th Alexandria was reached, where old colleagues received the pilgrim. A long talk with Mr. Weakley, with whom he was more than thankful to take counsel, was possible. And there was special gladness in finding his old Ramleh friend,

Mr. Schlottener, to whom years before he had been introduced by Mr. Pritchett. A memorable journey from Jaffa to Jerusalem in the eighties was recalled. It was in this wise :—

Lethaby had left the vehicle in which he had started from Jaffa, and had walked on in the darkness, entering Ramleh amid the snarling and barking of the too numerous and too watchful dogs. He could not find his friend's house in the dark, and no one was in the street. All he could do was to call aloud as he walked up the little town, " Schlottener ! Schlottener ! beit Schlottener ! " until someone, hearing the voice, came out, and guided the stranger to the right house. In accordance with Eastern custom, he opened the door, and there was disclosed a sight which greatly touched him, and which he never forgot. His good friend was sitting surrounded by several young men, who, by the light of a suspended lamp, were reading the Arabic Scriptures. It was near the time for their dispersion, and then all that eastern and apostolic entertaining could do for the friend was done. His whole nature was refreshed, and early in the morning the John-like host accompanied his guest for a space out of the town, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

Leaving these two kindred spirits in happy fellowship in Alexandria, Kerak may again appeal to us. Mr. Forder tells how :—

" Miss Bowyer has secured a good friend in a powerful old sheikh by making him a pair of calico riding trousers, he finding the materials. . . The chiefs are now asking us for a schoolmaster who will live among them in their tents. . . They offer to provide food, tent, and

protection if we will supply the man. This would be an advance indeed.

"In June I went to Kunzera, staying eight days ; in September visited Arrag ; and in November Kathrabbah, giving medicine and reading the good Book. . . Here are three open doors, and the ground broken up a little. . . . In Kerak nearly all our boys have their own Bibles. We have every reason to believe that these lads in their simple way offer their prayer morning and evening.

"During the past year 5,920 patients have received medicine from us—of course, not separate individuals. . . . The prevailing idea is that we get so much money for every case from the Queen or our Consul at Jerusalem. We hope during the year to see more done—something for the women and girls, a class for young Moslem men, and a regular meeting on Sundays for any who like to come.

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The Sitt informs Miss Arnold (Jan. 4th) that :—

"A little before Easter perhaps, or earlier if it seems better to do so, I shall come home alone, and shall wait and work until God shall mercifully bring my dear husband through the perils of the way. It is only an *attempt*, and may not be carried out. All pray for his safety and guidance and home-coming. Kerak has much of my thought and heart too. Mr. L. will take steamer from Alexandria for the Persian Gulf, and will then try further after seeing the English agent of the Bible Society at Bushire. He intends to proceed cautiously, either with or without a companion, and, God willing, he will surprise us one day by coming or sending to me at Kerak."

Miss Arnold relates how :—

“ On Tuesday we all three went down to the Ghôr on the Lesan, the narrow ledge projecting to the Dead Sea, which was formerly a causeway right across to the western side. Salim Sunaar went with us and took his Damascus tent. We also had medicines and provisions, and enjoyed the trip greatly, returning on Friday. As you know, this is the first time that Kerak has been deserted by the English since Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby first came. We left the school in charge of Mr. F.’s Greek boy Isa, and found upon our return all had gone well.” [It afterwards appeared that this confidence was misplaced, and that boxes had been rifled.]

“ I am sorry for those poor Ghawarini ! The Mujelli and Keraki go down constantly and exact taxes from them, so that they are left very poor and fever does its work among them too. They were very kind to us, and listened eagerly to the reading of the Bible in the evenings round the fire in the ‘ Shig ’ or guest-tent.

“ *February 28th.* Towards the end of the first week in this month came to us such a pitiable child,—a Bedawin boy of about ten years of age. He was nearly naked, only an old torn ‘ abbah ’ tied round his waste with a piece of leather. One foot and halfway up to the knee of that leg was quite gone. Four years ago, some distance eastwards, he was bitten by a snake. From want of attention, worms ate away the poor child’s foot. Now he hops about with the help of a long stick. We have clothed him, and our landlord’s wife very kindly attended to his head, which had been shamefully neglected. He has made his home with a widow and comes to school every day. . . . He is getting his poor stump of a leg attended to now, for it is not yet healed. It seems that he belongs to the ‘ Atowni ’ tribe, and originally came from Egypt.

“I have an attendance of fourteen boys, and we are now reading through the book of Deuteronomy; but it is harder work than one can possibly suppose at home to make these boys understand what they read. The written and spoken Arabic are so different, and for many generations these natives have never received any book education whatever.”

Mr. Lethaby spent a week in Alexandria, and discovered that the Rev. S. M. Zwemer, an American Missionary, was living in Bahrein, an island in the Persian Gulf,—a point which seemed precisely suited to his purpose. It was even suggested that Mr. Z. might be willing to associate himself with the projected journey northwards; so his next step was clear. He immediately selected such copies of the Scriptures at the dépôt as he needed, and on the 26th January moved on to Cairo. His friend, the Rev. W. Jackson, did not regard the project with favour, but they had a good Sabbath together, and at Wesley House he was introduced to a loyal Christian officer,—Sergeant Cameron, who had just purchased his discharge, and was fascinated with the Arabian proposal. They clasped hands, and Cameron consented to a comradeship, upon which they entered at once.

On the Sunday, at Port Said, a group of them held a “semi-agape” at Mr. Eolls; and so they had a good valedictory. Passports were put right, and Mrs. Sheldon Amos gave the good men her benediction. Then this modern St. George took

passage in the *Knight-Errant* for Ismalia and Suez.

On the Monday the Gulf of Akaba was passed, and Cameron and he began to study the Psalms together, while with the captain he took Hebrews. These three were sympathetic and companionable. The early part of the Red Sea passage was really pleasant; but it was quickly broken by the greatly increasing heat, and the sudden death on board of a Bombay native. The reverent funeral service at sea was marked by the onlooker as emphasizing creditable care for human life.

At a distance of four miles they passed Aden on the fine morning of the 18th,—the Aden which hereafter became another centre of Lethaby work. As opportunity offered, he read Arabic with Cameron. Land was seen on the morning of the 25th, and anchor dropped soon after noon at Bombay, where he spent an agreeable evening and Sunday with the Rev. J. Milton Brown.

They re-shipped on the *Khediva* on Monday and turned towards the Gulf. The vessel was very full of all sorts of folk, but there were no berths. Even first-class passengers had to sleep on deck. Arabs abounded, to whom W.L. spoke and read.

At Muscat a pilgrimage was made to the grave of Bishop French, and the goal at Bushire was eventually reached. Here Colonel Talbot, the English representative, said officially "don't" to what was proposed. But this counsel was not regarded as final, for on Tuesday they purchased

footgear and light "abbahs," and made enquiries as to the exchange of money for the contemplated tramp.

"During my journey," says W.L. to I.E.P., "I have had a strange insight into sin's besetments and the opportunities for usefulness,—the one eagerly caught at, the other, all but utterly neglected. The Rev. T. R. Hodgson, here, is the representative of the Bible Society. He has been most hospitable, and can give all necessary and dependable advice and information. . . Over the high mountains eastward lie Shiraz, Susa, and all the 'locales' of Daniel and Darius. But it is sad to realize, that though we nationally have 'come to the Kingdom for such a time as this,' yet we do next to nothing for the 'enlargement and deliverance' of the people.

"The Persian Gulf is essentially a British lake, but agnosticism or even atheism might be our national profession for aught the people know to the contrary. Here, and in other places—but still more easily here—a quiet, good, really evangelistic and *educational work* in the proper sense might be carried on at small cost, only let the consecrated souls be found. . .

"The rest and beautiful atmosphere have done much for me physically. . . Mr. H. speaks more hopefully of our project than at first.

"*Bahrein. April 5th.* I have found here a lovely place. The 'goodman' of the house, the Rev. S. M. Zwemer, is away in Bombay. He is of the American Dutch Reformed Church, and is in a fine place to do work among thousands of ignorant but civilized Moslems. It is a good base, and there are regular connections by the steamers with the outside world. The B. and F.B. Society gives a limited subsidy to his work. Would that he might feel led to join me and go on all or part of the way.

“The place is in itself very extraordinary—a sort of twin island—Marhama and Maherrok. Palm trees by the thousand; low shoally shores, so that steamers lie a mile or two out, and donkeys bring passengers and merchandise in from small boats. The shore is a mass of beautiful shells, and everywhere there are fragments of mother-of-pearl, which is the great source of revenue. There is plenty of ‘unearned increment’ yet in the oysters and their pearly contents, for which the divers lose or shorten their lives, and by means of which the Hindoo merchants, who live here, make their fortunes. Great big houses they live in, which are really ‘truck-shops’ for eatables and habiliments for these thousands, and those tens of thousands ‘over there,’ where I pray God may allow us to enter for Him. Small mosques abound for the both divisions of Islam, and as this is the month of Ramadam, things that way are exceptionally pronounced.”

Lethaby further reveals present facts and future hopes to a friend:—

“My most constant reflection is on the real scantiness of our knowledge about the world we live in, at least from a Christian point of view. How little we know of the open doors for work. This is the thought recurring all down the Red Sea, in the streets among the ten thousands of non-Christians in Bombay, most vividly and painfully at the grave of Bishop French at Muscat, at every stopping place up the Persian Gulf, and at the home of the British Resident at Bushire, where but a feeble spark of missionary fire exists.

“Now I am not going to cast off Kerak and Moab, but I have a heart big enough to take in Bahrein as well, and so have you, if you only saw it. Here is a population of probably scores of thousands, *all* Muhammadan, except

one postmaster—a Eursasian and Romanist. And yet the people who have ‘the pearl of great price,’ and who know more of the ‘*field*,’ *i.e.*, the world, than any other, are all ignorant that there is such an easy and excellent a place wherein to sow the good seed. But as I have now each evening looked down upon the Muhammadan worshippers going through their evening service in the mosque close to this house, I have felt it is not for us to hold up our heads in pride or scorn; but rather to stoop in sorrow and confession ourselves, even as they in outward form and prostration.

“It is a day’s sail to the mainland, and twelve days’ march to the first of the great cities, by name, Riadh; then come Bereideh, Areizeh, Hayil, etc. These mark intervals of hundreds of miles, and of many a day before Maan, on the Damascus and Mecca caravan route, can be sighted, and Kerak be within measurable distance.”

Mr. Zwemer’s return to Bahrein was so long delayed, that Lethaby deemed it expedient to go on himself to Bussorah, leaving Cameron at Bahrein. By the Saturday, he was in the mouth of the Euphrates, and approaching the city between the palms on the banks of the river. A lingering twenty-four hours’ quarantine intervened, which fortunately included “very sweet Sabbath stillness.” On Monday, the Rev. Mr. Cantine welcomed him, and with Mr. Zwemer, accompanied him to the bazaars and the Persian Consul; but Mr. C. was not favourable to co-operation.

On the return to Bahrein with Zwemer, there was much discussion as to the future. His friend

was disinclined to any big undertaking, and he himself, in only very indifferent health, was greatly depressed. But on Wednesday, 3rd May, the whole aspect of things changed. Sergeant Cameron, upon whom Lethaby was relying, decided to give up altogether, and return to Egypt and England. Daoud, the depôt keeper, was to go, temporarily, to Bussorah, and Mr. Lethaby agreed to give such help, for a while, as he could, to Mr. Zwemer, in Bahrein, Z. promising to go with him in the autumn. This decision was immediately acted upon; Cameron and Daoud leaving the next day. The change was, upon the whole, an agreeable one.

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Meanwhile, from the Moab eyrie, the Sitt chronicles, on the 2nd May:—

“My return was at the right time, as I found a good escort able to go through with me to the Hameideh and Mujelli tents, without trouble or molestation. The Mujellis are much crestfallen and less troublesome than before. One of them, who was the terror of all, came last week with his eldest brother, Semaine, to welcome me into the tents of the encampment. They invited me to rest in their sister's tent. I accepted the invitation, and slept there, much to their gratification and my own comfort. Bedr, the younger of the two Sheikhs, *led* my mule all the way home next day, and *earned* two medjidehs honestly.

“An hour or two saw us all on the road to Kerak, climbing up the steep mountain side. No sooner was my white umbrella seen, than a host of dear lads, with Miss

Arnold, approached, and we met with joy, after more than a year's separation.

"*May 10th.* To-day there came in from the tents, one of our former English reading boys—Musa, now grown a fine, tall youth of sixteen. He spent an hour with me, talking English the whole time,—a dear lad, whom we rejoiced over as the most spiritually-minded of all our boys.*

But the next day, alas, what a tragedy!

"This is a day of sorrow in the city," says the Sitt, "such as is seldom seen, even here! The dear lad, Musa, left me, to go up the mountain with his Moslem servant to cut green barley for their animals, and a well-known murderer shot both the servant and poor Musa, after trying to steal the barley. The servant still lives, but our poor lad is dead; and now the funeral is taking place, with most painful mourning. The details are very distressing to me, as he was such a gentle spirit, and rejoiced so to meet me only a few hours ago!"

Early in June, Mr. Forder, who had been to England to confer with the "Council," and had brought his sister back with him to Jerusalem, returned with her to Kerak for a brief visit. Miss Bowyer and Miss Arnold, the one in the Medical department, and the other in the school, had energetically continued their work during the year.

At Bahrein, the reigning Sheikh Janin became anxious to be rid of the missionary, Zwemer, and his temporary colleague. He had desired them to come and confer with him. But at the gate of his house they were told they were not that day

* See his letter on page 249.

wanted. So the two men knelt down to thank God, and returned to their reading and quiet. Then the son of the British Agent, Mohamed Ameer, suggested that they should consult his father before going to Janin again; and when, on the Monday, Zwemer adopted this course, Janin called him "a pig," for his pains. Intrigue and excitement followed, but the cause of it was discovered, and a season of quiet again followed.

In the course of this Bahrein residence, Mr. Lethaby tells how, one day, outside the depôt, he explained to a passing Moslem, during conversation, the text "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is Eternal Life, etc." The man listened thoughtfully, then asked if he could buy the book with these words in it. He bought it and went away to read. Next evening he came up the steps, asking for the "Sheib" (old man with a beard), to whom he said, "I have read the words in this Book. They are true. I believe them." . . . What a joy it was when, two years later, Mr. Zwemer wrote to Aden, telling that the man not only believed then, but had kept his faith and lived consistently up to that time. That was, indeed, a source of gladness!

Daoud, after a while, returned from Bussorah, and, strangely, became a source of entanglement, in divers ways; so complications increased. The Sheikh was still determined to send Zwemer off, and the "Sheib" was warned "to be very careful."

Zwemer, meanwhile, visited his brother, who was working higher up in the Gulf.

At this juncture, Lethaby had a long talk with a certain Hamid, whose acquaintance he had made, and who seemed a likely companion for the contemplated journey northward. This was all the more desirable, as Hamid was born at Riyadh, the first real objective on the intended route. He, of course, knew the road well, and expressed his willingness to go all the way. It seemed so suitable an arrangement that packing was promptly completed.

On the Tuesday, Mr. Zwemer returned unexpectedly, bringing his brother with him as his colleague. So there was no longer even a temporary sphere for Lethaby in Bahrein. Furthermore, Zwemer had changed his mind as to accompanying the itinerant. He, however, talked with Hamid about the journey, and agreed with him definitely as to terms. For some reason or other, the next morning Hamid had thought better of it, and absolutely declined the undertaking. So again the way closed; Cameron had failed, Zwemer had failed, Hamid had failed. There was nothing for it but to believe that this was *not* the way Providence would have him go.

To decide was to act, and he at once looked towards Bombay and thence to Port Said and Jerusalem. The next day he was off by the *Purlia*. He found the captain interesting and communicative, but the temperature ran up to

105°, and he gladly bartered a copy of the Psalms for the refreshment of the first grapes of the season.

During the days he had to spare at Bombay, he went inland to look up several old friends who were within reach. But he was back early on Thursday, 13th July, and boarded the *Marita* for Port Said. The weather was rough and worse was prophesied. "On Sunday the only sign of a religious service," he says, "was a little five-year-old, Nancy Harkin, singing to herself 'Jesus loves me.'"

The sea broke over the ship almost constantly, and meals were not popular. But experiences were much pleasanter by the time they were off Aden, and the diving boys had not then been forbidden to show their prowess. Meanwhile, he was enjoying the life of McCheyne. Suez was reached on Tuesday, 25th, and he was again welcomed at Port Said by W.H.T. in the evening. A day or two more and he was on the Austrian boat for Jaffa, and Miss A. was surprised by his advent in the Holy City on Monday, July 31st.

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On Mr. Forder's return to Kerak, it was arranged for Miss A. to have the relief of a sojourn in El Khuds. The usual route by Mojib and Medeba was closed, as there was fighting between the Anazi and Beni Sakr; it was necessary, therefore, to take the way by the South of the Dead Sea, in the company of Hebron merchants trading with

Kerak. Miss Arnold tells Major Haig of her journey :—

“ We reached Khanazera soon after noon on Saturday, July 15th, but only stayed to refill our water-skins. At El Mota I saw that poor ‘ Attowni ’ boy Ede, who lost his foot from a snake-bite. He recognised me at once, and a smile spread over his broad, intelligent face. With true Bedawin instinct the poor child longed for the freedom of tent life. But I expect he will come back to us.

“ Our caravan consisted of twenty men, about forty donkeys and mules, a horse, and 500 sheep and goats. As it turned out, it was very foolish to take sheep through the Ghôr in the middle of July. There was a difficult and perilous descent into the Ex Safeah—a scramble “ worse than Mojib,” and a night’s encampment full of excitement.

“ Next morning, by half-past three, we were on the move, and the air was delightful until the sun rose. The scenery was overawing. The rocks, mainly of red sandstone, were weirdly worn into all imaginable and unimaginable forms. I wanted to talk to these grand old mountains, and inquire how long they had been standing there in their solitary grandeur. Now and again one would suddenly find oneself at the entrance to some fairy or gigantean stronghold. I could but exclaim, ‘ Oh, Lord, how manifold are Thy works ! ’

“ On reaching the plain we were met by a dozen or so of half-dressed, black-looking Ghawarini, and we rode along for an hour, with these well-mounted rag-bags, for the poor things were wretchedly clothed. Two or three of the raggedest of them rode up to me. They looked so ridiculous, mounted on their beautiful mares, as they asked me for ‘ baksheesh.’ I replied, ‘ Whence, my brothers,

should I have "baksheesh," coming from Kerak ' ? At which they grinned, and fell back.

"The poor animals had not tasted water since leaving Khanazera, and when we came to a narrow and rapid stream, the parched sheep rushed headlong into it, others pushing eagerly behind. Fifteen were washed away and drowned before the shepherds could get to them.

"As we got towards the South-West corner of the Dead Sea we found a filthy environment of bog. I had vivid visions of myself precipitated into it. The men shouted, and I vigorously poked the mule and held on through all his flounderings till we finally emerged safe and sound. Some of the animals collapsed in the midst of it ; and then—what shouting and lifting and pulling !

"On Tuesday we found ourselves quite in another world as we entered the defile Wady-In-Nakhbar. It was so narrow at first that we were obliged to go single file. The perpendicular white chalk cliffs on either side ran to a height of from 100 to 200 feet. In many places we might have been a caravan of camels, plodding along so noiselessly in the starlight.

"Turning sharply off to the Zawire-el-Foke, we sped on up to Masada. The ruins are wonderful—the very place for 'its tragedy !' They rise sheer from the mountain top and command the whole of the valley right down to the Dead Sea ; but we tried vainly to rest in the sweltering heat.

"Within a couple of hours, after passing through Karmel and Ziph, it was good indeed to get again to water springs and unload. Afterwards, by an easy jog we reached Hebron at half-past five. Abd-es-Salam took me straight to his house in the heart of the city, near the cave of Machpelah, where I had the luxury of a beautiful clean native bed on the floor."

The day following, in Hebron, "green pasture" was found with the "Mildmay ladies" and Mr. and Mrs. Murray. Jerusalem was reached early on the morning of Friday, 21st July, ten days before Mr. Lethaby's own arrival from the Persian Gulf.

His recent movements had been so rapid, and in a part of the world where postal communication is so painfully sluggish, that the Sitt, then in Kerak with Miss Bowyer, had no knowledge of his return. Meanwhile, Mr. Forder had brought his sister back to Jerusalem, and had discovered the lady who afterwards became his wife. Unfortunately he was detained many days in El Khuds by a severe illness, and it was not until his return to Kerak with Miss A. that the Sitt could get to her husband to confer about the future.

In view of the uncertainties as to the occupation of Kerak, first by the Turks and then by the Missioners, and the inevitable differences of opinion as to the manner in which the Kerak Mission should be conducted, Mr. F. was instructed to discontinue the building operations which had been authorised earlier in the year. So Lethaby found himself in a "*cul-de-sac*," and he had again unwillingly to await events, which were every day becoming more critical. The Secretary had written to the Sitt in August :—"It will be strange if you have to look to the Turk as deliverers ; we

are mainly troubled about the disturbances round Kerak, and their results."

On the 15th September the Sitt and Miss Bowyer reached Jerusalem, much to the joy of W.L. But the earliest notes of their personal statements were disquieting; and speaking of a subsequent report from Miss A. he says:—"It mars comfort, and compels fresh prayer for guidance." This anxiety accounts, partially, no doubt for his record on the 30th: "Had to take to bed. Really ill all day. Vomiting and shivering. Temp. 103°." He had been also much shaken by hearing from the Sitt of the death of his young and hopeful friend and pupil, Musa Khasus, on the day after he had placed W.L.'s letter in the Sitt's hand. It was a dreadful sorrow to them both.

On the 9th October he wrote to Mr. Piercy:—

"Let me give you the facts and dates of the past few weeks. When I wrote to you in August it was my intention, though still far from strong, to return to Kerak with Mr. F. and Miss A. But the condition of things, present and prospective, made it plain that my health and strength were not equal to the stress. . . Ten days ago a recurrence of the fever, which attacked me two years back, so prostrated me that I wrote to a 'Home of Rest' in England, enquiring about a sojourn there for the whole or a part of the winter. . . I am now better. So please accept our assurance, that we shall both act in as frank and explicit a way as possible. God's work is far more to be considered than the wishes of any of His workers. We commenced a work without counsellors, and you were personally willing to forward whatever

moneys friends might wish to contribute. . . I have not been urgent in acting on the wishes of my wife and myself; and it has been the greatest pleasure—with prayer—to take the counsel of such men as the Rev. Wm. Arthur, I. E. Page, and yourself; yet I do not think they would wish us to forego our sincere convictions, and act on principles we believe to be wrong. . . But what may be Providentially indicated by the state of my own health and events generally as to our separate or united course in a few days, I cannot now foresee. . . For the present there are serious embarrassments.”

And so these apostles felt sure that it was their wisdom still to “wait in Jerusalem.”

On Monday, 10th December, Miss Bowyer set out on her return to Kerak. About the same time there is the earliest foreshadowing of Aden as coming into the plan of their lives. Mr. Lethaby never thought that any of the planning was his own. He certainly was supremely anxious to be always a “worker together with God.” We note this simple entry and pass on. “In the dusk, call for Mr. Irssich (Bible Society representative), who stayed to dinner. I walked with him half-a-mile, he talking of Aden, etc.”

At the end of the same week we hear this many-sided man saying:—“I try to laugh by reading a book of Mark Twain.” Other coming events cast their shadows. On Tuesday, 12th, Mr. Sykes hinted at the C.M.S. going to Kerak. But on the 15th, “the two men, Saleh and Hassan, of Beit-jala, agree for Monday morning—six medjidehs

each to take us to Kerak, so we resolved to 'go forward.' While I repack, Jane sees the men, who are now afraid to go beyond Medeba." Thwarted once more.

The extraordinarily rough weather which set in made them thankful for the continued hospitality of the Holy City. They were on visiting terms with almost all the English community, and with some in sympathetic intimacy. There were many available and appreciated religious services; easy visits to old and interesting haunts; and good spells of reading were possible. So the year ended as restfully as chronic perplexities would permit.





SHEIKH KHALIL, OF KERAK.
(Of the Mujelli Family.)

**' Shadows deep have crossed our pathway,
We have trembled in the storm ;
Clouds have gathered round us darkly
That we could not see Thy form ;
Yet Thy love hath never left us
In our griefs alone to be,
And the help each gave the other
Was the strength that came from Thee."**

MRS. HAWKINS.

CHAPTER X

Turkish Occupation. Good-bye to Kerak. 1894

DEFINITE information having reached Mr. Lethaby that Kerak was actually occupied by the Turks, he was impelled to a decision as to his course, and what he deemed the only practicable solution of the quandary into which the mission had been plunged. Letters written on the 3rd January will sufficiently set forth the position.

To the " M.R. " :—" I have to tell you that ' the abomination of desolation,' by courtesy and diplomacy called the ' Sublime Porte,' has been allowed by the Providence of God to extend its sway as far even as that city where we have laboured and been blessed. One of its first acts has been to stop our work, demand firmans, etc. Under these circumstances, and as the Church Missionary Society are at present, and have for

years been working in Palestine generally, and also on the East of the Jordan; and their nearest missionary, the Rev. Henry Sykes has himself twice been to Kerak, I have thought it best to ask him and the Committee of the C.M.S. if they will endeavour to do what good they can and work as best they can."

To the Secretary of the C.M.S. London :—" Ten years ago, Kerak, in the land of Moab, was without either a living preacher or a living Turk. After many hindrances and difficulties, my wife and I obtained permission of the ruling Sheikh and went to reside there. Bedawin and other Moslem children by the score have been taught to read and love their Bibles; the sick have been relieved in thousands of cases. . . Now, alas! the Turk has come, and done what he threatened—stopped *all* work. Rather than cause strife and confusion to no purpose, I would much rather that the C.M.S. should take over what work can be continued, and act as they may wish.

"Property or belongings we have none to hand over. But, on the other hand, we have no debt or responsibilities. . . Our teaching has been that which is simply biblical and evangelical. . . I leave the matter in your hands and with the Revs. J. R. L. Hall and H. Sykes, praying that we may all be guided aright."

To Mrs. Wiseman :—"Your kindness has been such that you ought not to be, for a day longer than is necessary, unaware of the great change in

Kerak. Do you know that the Turkish misgovernment has at last fastened upon it, and that soldiers and seraglios now take the place of sheikhs and bandits. But with this result—that at once the emissary of Constantinople has forbidden all teaching and other work which has been carried on.

“ Miss A., who has come* to inform us of events, is of one mind with ourselves to ask the C.M.S. to take over our work, such as it is. They are in touch with the Pashas, and I never can or will be. Do you not think it better to let others do what they can if we are not able to do what we would ? ”

Of course, Mr. Lethaby could not at this stage speak for the other workers.

The “ Council ” of the Kerak Mission, at a meeting held in London January 3rd, 1894, reluctantly concluded that “ its duties could no longer be carried on satisfactorily, and agreed to dissolve as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made.”

The little Council in Jerusalem decided that the two ladies should go to Kerak and further report.

* Miss Arnold's escort on this journey was Sheikh Khalil, a cousin of the ruler of Kerak, whom they encountered on their first entrance into the rock city. He was, perhaps, the best sample of a Mujelli the Lethabys had met. He was greatly pleased when asked to sit for the portrait reproduced at the head of this chapter. His sisters were the somewhat erratic pupils of the Sitt.

For the present it was felt that the righteous indignation of the man would best expend itself at a distance.

So, with an unusually agreeable company, the two left on the 19th January, and, "better for the ride in the lovely fresh air," they once more spent the night at the Jordan Bridge. The familiar surroundings of Khalil Sunaar's house at Medeba gave Sunday rest, and "in a bitterly cold wind" early on Monday, 22nd, the journey was continued.

"From our old house, Kerak, 26th, sitting in your armchair, safe and sound, and intensely grateful," the Sitt writes:—

"On the evening of Wednesday we found a good meal of mountain partridge and tea awaiting us here, and a fine sleep in my own bed prepared one for a day of visitors. . . .

"We hear that a fresh order has come from the Mutasserif stating that a doctor and drugs had been brought here, and that no medicines were to be given from this house.

"On the road, when approaching Kerak, men from Es Salt, Makarries, called us to go and see a man who had dropped dead in a 'bir' of 'tibbin.' It was strangely, sadly true. We all quickly left our animals, took the stoutest ropes from the mules, and finding a strong man, a servant of the Mujellis, let him down. Meantime, our Khusus men were frantically wild. Amid their screams we did what we could. Alas! the poor man had been for hours in the 'bir,' and was quite dead.

"You will be shocked, as we were, to find it was our poor Musa's father! brother of Muallim Jirius. . . . I

tried to comfort the widow and Oudy* and the five young children. Then this morning the whole city is moved by the death of Khowadja Girijs Sunaar soon after midnight. There has been a great wailing of the two families, and all feel gloomy and sad. Under the new regime, Girijs was made Effendi conjointly with Sheikh Saleh and Khalil. Now the Christians say, 'Who will act in our name?'

"*Thursday, February 1st.* On Saturday last, most of our old scholars, who are left, came in twos and threes to see me. You would be pained to find the yard next to our house and the school yard filled by a large military tent. There are two others in the school ground; and the boys' school room of Muallim Salami is fitted as a 'divan,' where the officials spend their time, the ladies and children being upstairs in the Muallinat's rooms. There are new windows and curtains and all the usual paraphernalia of a civilized family.

"*Friday, February 2nd.* . . We are living in the midst of soldiers, and now I am getting used to it, certainly find it was right for me to come back. . . I am sure Miss A. should not be left in Kerak, if the other workers make up their mind to leave. . . I have been to condole with the bereaved families, as you would have done. . . Khalil is going to settle in Kerak, and will most likely be Effendi, in the place of Girijs. . . The fathers of some of the boys and girls have been to ask when we will open school. I told them to wait patiently,

* During the summer of 1909, Sir John Gray-Hill and Lady Hill were in Damascus. One day the card was sent in to their hotel of Oudy Khusus Effendi, a deputy in the Mejliiss (Parliament) from Es Salt (Ramothe Gilead). This "gentlemanly, western-dressed Effendi," desired news of his old teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Lethaby, and was deeply grieved to hear of Mr. Lethaby's death. He is a native of Kerak, and one of the boys in whose heart the "seeds of life" were sown. Two other young men of Kerak, in native dress, were with Oudy Effendi, who were also "Lethaby's lads," and sent kindly greeting.

until we could get authority in the right way, and, meantime, to let their children come to salaam *me*, as I would take the risk of answering to the officials, if they continued to be watched, and forbidden by the soldiers, as they said they were.

“On the Sunday morning, before we had finished breakfast, a good number of children had come, and I called them right into the house. . . . Then I sat down with them, and gave them a talk, and got them to say with me the ten commandments and a psalm. . . . Before we had time to finish, though I had prayed in English, and they had joined in the Lord’s Prayer in Arabic, voices outside were calling. I found that Abdullah Beg and three soldiers were at our gate. Abdullah wished to speak to *me*. He had brought a message from the Mutasserif that, yesterday, I had many children in the house, and he must ask me not to begin school or give medicine until proper authorization was granted. . . . I told him to give my salutations to the Governor, and to tell him that it was ‘Yowm-er-Rubb,’ and I could not do business with him that day, but on the morrow, I would ask to speak with him. So A. B. went off, after saying he was very sorry to bring any message like that; but so repeatedly had people gone to tell that children were coming here, that he would have to place a soldier at the gate to prevent it. I told A. Beg to say, that certainly no soldier must come inside my gate, without my leave, as nothing was done contrary to the express command of the chief.”

But soldiers having been actually sent to occupy the house :—

“On Monday morning,” says the Sitt, “I went, accompanied by Miss Arnold and Sheikh Isa Mujelli, and Abdullah Beg, to visit the Mutasseriff, His Excellency

Hilmi Pasha.* He rose, as we entered, and motioned us to chairs on his right hand. One or two officers only were with him ;—a secretary, who took notes of all, and the tutor of his little son, who was learning his lessons in his father's presence. After some polite remarks, and enquiry if Miss A. or I conversed in French, we talked in Arabic. Isa Mujelli was so troubled at our not being allowed to give medicine or teach, that, in a most refreshing Bedawin fashion, he began to tell the Pasha that we had been several years here, healing and helping the people, 'balash,' and wished us to be allowed to go on as before. This was rather a bold stroke, and if we had not been so much on our dignity, would have provoked a smile. I told the facts of our coming, with the consent of Mohamed Mujelli, and that for seven years and more we and our helpers had worked for the benefit of the people.

"Then, most politely, sometimes answering me personally, or turning to Miss A., with her better Arabic, he said something like this:—'He knew of our good work, and personally, would not have hindered us, but he must obey orders from Stamboul. Irregular work was not so safe as that which was under rule. Dr. Mackinnon, of Damascus, was duly authorized to practice, from his college in Edinburgh, and there was no difficulty in getting a permit from Stamboul. But it had been found to work very evil, when, say, one gave anti-pyrene for every pain in the head, or fever; or any unauthorized person gave this, that, or the other.'

"I felt more concern for the school, and so explained

* H. E. Hilmi Pasha has, since the date of this interview, been advanced to divers positions of responsibility in the Turkish Empire; and in Salonika and Constantinople, has, during recent months (1909 10) become a very conspicuous leader in the "Young Turk" Government, and the head of the "Hilmi" Administration and Grand Vizier.

that I wished to have the children come to see me during the time we are waiting for our orders. He said, 'Oh, yes, that certainly the children might come to salaam, and stay a time,' but that I must not let them go on learning lessons from books, or make it like a school.

"My appeal for the removal of the soldiers from the house was met by a reply in an apologetic manner, to this effect:—'You, ladies, citizens of a country with strong laws, will understand, and not be afraid of the military rule, which must be here for the present.' He assured us that all men under him would honour us, but that no exception could be made. Then I said, 'I cannot enter my house, and reside there, while the soldiers are inside. Where I live is a little bit of England.' He replied, 'But you are out of the jurisdiction of the English Consul in Jerusalem.' I said, 'Yes, I know I am by distance, but he will soon know of my position. He does, already know of my return from El Khuds.'

"I waited, and he, the Mutasserif, said, 'Why do you wait?' 'Until the soldiers have orders to remove to the outside of my gate,' I said. He then sent his orderly; and after a little while, and some explanation, the two men, harmless enough, although in the garb of Turkish soldiers, went to the outside of our compound gate, and enjoyed the coffee and biscuits sent out to them then, and thereafter, for the sake of peace.

"Rising, as we left, the Mutasseriff told us to make any request, or ask, at any time, if I wished to speak on matters of business.

"He had introduced his little boy, and I had told him that the younger child was brought to me the other day by the orderly who carries it. The Pasha informed me he had lost his two little girls. I am going to see his one wife to-morrow. She must be lonely. She and her mother bowed to me at the top of the steps the other day



A HEAVILY-CHAINED PRISONER (MOAB).

when I was speaking to the baby. I felt thankful for this interview, and it has done us good every way.

"On other occasions, for divers matters, I had to seek the consent of His Excellency. For instance, he granted my request for the removal of chains from a prisoner before he was tried. He was a Christian, Ibrahim, our usual trader, and attendant on our journeys to Jerusalem. In the matter of medical aid, nothing would be allowed to be given, unless my husband or myself would go to Stamboul and be authorized there. This, of course, was out of the question."

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There was no alternative but to discontinue work under these restrictions. With the best interests of the young people at heart, as of the many adults who had learned to value what was being done for them before the coming of the new military rulers, they prepared to withdraw from the town—with *how much heart-ache* cannot be written. Mr. Lethaby records in his diary for this year of pangs, that the work which had cost them so painful a starting, and had been continued in frequent tears and agony, would assuredly leave its mark upon them, and that "Kerak" was as certainly written on his heart as was "Calais" on another, and, maybe, less sensitive soul.

There is a plucky paragraph written January, 31st, which tells how unwilling Mr. Lethaby was to give up this loved work. "Would it be well for us still," he says, "to live on in Kerak, Kethrubba, or Maïn, and do what we can? Or, if the Gray-Hills would take us with them to the

Jowf, would you go, and trust, with medicines and books, to both of us finding our way slowly across to Bahrein together? I see no objection, and would be quite ready."

A few days later, Mr. Weakley again offered the pilgrim work in Jerusalem until April 29th. This was promptly accepted as a new pointing of Providence in a new crisis. For some weeks, too, he was once more able to render efficient help to the Rev. J. R. Longley Hall, as also to the Rev. Mr. Kelk. So he was fully and usefully employed.

The effect of the Turkish occupation is further illustrated by the Sitt :—

"The women are more afraid than the men, as the soldiers are quartered in nearly every house. Most of our scholars' homes have one or two or more soldiers in them . . . and they are telling them it is a shame for Moslem boys to be taught by a 'bint,' and she a Christian. But they taunt and hinder the girls too.

"The people who began to sell drink to the soldiers have been heavily fined by the Pasha, and only escaped being sent to prison by giving up all the stuff. No drunkenness is allowed. In many respects, the change here in the city and on the road is marvellous. There is no thieving; shops are open six days and closed on Sundays. The butcher comes to take orders for very nice goat or mutton. There is a fixed price for goods as in the best Jerusalem shops. House-building will have to go on, as every house is full. The military offer four medjidehs a month for our house, but our landlord tells me that he won't take any offer while you and I want to

keep it on. . . I am afraid your righteous soul would be sorely vexed at the sight of these soldiers.

"Feb. 19th. Last Wednesday Kolloff Asmerat was in the porch, and Fellah Assasfi with him. The two were at work for me, with a word now and then as they came into the house. There were no other lads or girls near, when the black soldier servant of the Pasha pushed in at the gate and ordered the boys off, asking their names. I was there in a moment. Muallim Sunaar followed the soldier in, and stood by to help if needful. I quietly told the children to go on with their work and not be afraid, and informed the fellow, who was most persistent in trying to drive the two boys out at the gate, that *he*, not the boys, was to go, and I would go with him at once to the Mutasserif; so he went off. . .

"I informed Abdullah and Khalil, both privileged persons, of this man's impudence, and afterwards received a message from the Mutasserif, that the fellow had exceeded his duty, and that I am to go right over and speak if any further annoyance is caused.

"It is probable that Miss B. will get away next week if there is a good escort for her.

"Feb. 22nd. The whole city is *en fête* for the Sultan's accession. The open ground by the side of our house has been a parade ground, and the 'Serai' is hung with lamps, and so is the 'Castle.' You must have seen the rockets going up, such a sight as 'the oldest inhabitant' never had. All seem well pleased except those in prison. The lamps and tar-balls are giving a good light; the soldiers are singing, and coffee is being passed round to the onlookers, to their great surprise.

"I went to-day, while the Pasha was up at the Castle, to see his wife, the lady Kadija. She is a very pleasant person, who will be glad to go for a walk with me, as she doesn't know the place, and is afraid to go out with

only her female servant. She knits her own baby's socks, and is very intelligent and womanly. . . I have sorted and partly packed books and papers."

Mr. Forder, greatly embarrassed by growing entanglement, wrote February 27th:—

"I feel grieved to leave Kerak, but what can I do otherwise. The day before I came away to escort Miss B. to Jerusalem, I had notice from the landlord of my house to leave it, as he wanted it for the soldiers at double the rent I am paying; so that again points to my leaving. God will open up a field for me, I am sure. . . Now, away to Kerak once more."

The same date, the Sitt writes:—"The Mutasserif has told Mr. Sykes that Mr. F. will be sent out of the country if he gives even a single dose of quinine, or we teach school again. . . But if I get sent away for giving even a cup of tea, a little ginger or cloves—nothing of medicine—well, so be it. I haven't the heart to see people suffering, and order them to do the impossible, *i.e.*, go to the soldiers' doctor and give him the price of a sheep for a dose of medicine. . .

"Tell me what is best to do about consigning our boxes. Abd-es-Sallam, of Hebron, would perhaps more cheaply take the whole lot by contract to Jaffa from Kerak on camels."

Mrs. Lethaby was requested by the Rev. Hy. Sykes to remain in Kerak for Miss A.'s sake until Mr. and Mrs. F. returned together.

It was still a pleasure to Lethaby to keep in touch with his friend Zwemer, who wrote:—"You are remembered in Bahrein, and the work there

continues prosperous. . . Will you not pray for me? God will reward *your faith* even if He did not see fit to grant you the performance of what was in your heart. However different we may be in our views and plans, there is one land towards which our hearts both entirely go—Arabia!”

On March 3rd, the Rev. J. R. Longley Hall confirmed the decision of the C.M.S. to take over the work in Kerak, but details were not yet agreed upon.

The stringency of the new rule became more and more pronounced:—"It is reported," the Sitt says, "that the Turkish officials are offering more money for our house, and are really asking our landlord to turn us out, as they do not want English people here. They say the Sultan is prepared to be very kind to the Keraki."

Just at this time a personal matter, which had added seriously to their already sufficiently heavy anxieties, came to a head. A sum of £250, which had been set aside during their business years, had, as they believed, been rescued from a doubtful investment, and deposited in a recognized trustworthy Bank in Jerusalem. This was now proving, only too certainly, a misplaced confidence. Unfortunately a notice for withdrawal was given too late, and the whole amount was lost. The meaning of such a loss to these two, who were, by lapse of years, approaching their dependent stage, can be easily imagined.

The closing weeks of the Sitt at Kerak were happily spent. She says, April 3rd :—

“My time has been a good deal occupied in making old clothes and new for my poor girls and for the baby of the wife of Saleem. It gives me some of my happier hours in the midst of packing and thinking, why must I go from this place? . . . It seems remarkable to have no robbery and raids as formerly and to be able to go and come without fear. But the Mujellis have to accompany the detachments of soldiers to gather the taxes from the sheep masters.

“Little Kolloff and his brothers, less than himself, are lying in our porch playing with a top and happy as lambs. They are fatherless and motherless, but well cared for by their aunt. Kolloff tells me the Mujellis and the soldiers said they would not tax the three goats of these ‘yateem’! Commendable mercy to the orphans!

“*April 3rd.* If we must leave Kerak, it is still probable that England may assert a claim for what remains to us of power to work for God and humanity; but how, when, or where are quite uncertain. It will always be matter for grateful remembrance that in our work in Kerak you (Miss Barlee) gave such valued help which cannot be reckoned on balance sheets.”

“To W.L. *April 20th.* I went to see the Pasha’s wife ten days ago, and told her a great deal of our earlier experience, but made use of my knowledge of different people to explain poor Ibrahim’s affair. He was in prison for a supposed old standing debt. I put it in the least unfavourable light and asked her to be kind enough to speak to her husband for Ibrahim to be allowed to ride his own mule on his compulsory journey to Nazareth, and that a surety here should be accepted for him. I

told her I had just come from seeing him in prison in the castle, the only Christian there. She told me to-day that her husband accepted my pleading, and has allowed Isa Khusus to become bail for him, and the affair will now, I trust, be speedily settled. . . . It was bitterly cold when he started on his long journey, two hours after midnight on Tuesday morning. He has become thin and worn in prison, so I found for him a woollen shirt of yours, and the long top-coat those good people at Thirsk gave you for your Moab journeys. As you were not using it, I thought it was putting it to a good use to let it go to *Nazareth*. He and his wife and Sitt Nasra were very grateful. But for our pleading, he would have had to walk by the side of the post horses all the way ! ”

The Secretary of the C.M.S. wrote W.L., 20th April : “ We heartily trust that whatever fruit there has been to your labours may not be lost, and that your time of seed-sowing may, by the watering of others, still, under the blessing of God, produce much fruit.”

At the beginning of May there seemed to be no sufficient reason for the Sitt to remain in Kerak, while Mr. Lethaby was much in need of her presence. So on Tuesday, the 8th, amid the general and affecting regrets of the people among whom she and her husband had lived and worked so long, she set out to rejoin him in El Khuds. Sleeping in a tent near Mojib the first night, she got to Medeba the next day, Jericho on Thursday, and Jerusalem on Friday.

The loyalty of the Mujellis to the new régime soon had its testing. Miss A. says, 3rd June :—

"Theab-ibn-Salami Mujelli, the father of Mahmood, has had his allowance from the Turks cut off:—(1) because his son took Miss Bowyer's goods; (2) because he stole a donkey from a Bedawin; (3) some affair about a girl he took by force. So here beginneth the first chapter in Mujelli disaffection."

Miss A. herself remained in Kerak, at Mr. Sykes' request, in the expectation that he might succeed in getting permission to re-open the school. Mr. Forder consented to serve the C.M.S. in Kerak for a time, and early in July brought his wife there.

W.L.'s unfailing friend, Mr. Weakley, of Alexandria, visited Jerusalem in the beginning of April, and the whole question of the future was again looked at carefully and sympathetically. On the 20th June, Mr. W. wrote:—"I could wish you to be in charge of the depôt in Aden, if only for a season. But I hesitate greatly to influence you in that direction. Your physical power would, I fear, be unequal to bear another season in a tropical heat, which varies but little in the twenty-four hours. And I would in no case consent to your making the trial without Mrs. Lethaby's comfort and help. . . . But my way is not clear to make a definite proposal to you now."

A month later events had further matured, and Lethaby was requested to go to Alexandria to confer; as a result of which he received a definite

appointment for a year to the Camp in Aden, "to further the work of the Bible Society in South Arabia and the adjacent regions on the African coast, in the Catholic spirit recognised by the Society; and to be a friend in all good things of the Colporteur Stephanos Makar."

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In closing this central portion of the life-work of Mr. Lethaby, and before entering on a brief story of the Aden period, it may be well to gather up in a concluding paragraph or two some general words of adjustment.

The wrench in parting from her little Bedawin girls was very painful to the Sitt. She says:—

"Devotion and affectionate regard were by no means all on the side of the boys. The Arab girls were as constant in attendance as their home duties would permit. I made it a rule that bringing a baby sister or brother would always be better than the chance of having to remain away. And to watch these bright-faced little women of from eight to thirteen or so, controlling the movements of the little brown babies, was very pleasant indeed.

"Addiya and Soffiya nearly always had to bring their small charge. Soffiya was broken-hearted when she had to be taken away to Maïn, ten days' journey south of Kerak, to be married there. It was her description of Maïn (the biblical Maanaim) with the river between, towards Mount Hor, and its many gardens, which first made Mr. Lethaby propose that some of us should move on in that direction and start work there. Soffiya's grief was real, and so was ours, at the parting; though we

comforted her with the thought of our going to see her, and possibly living there in her new town.

"Addiya, too, was a most winsome girl. When our school work had to be stopped by Turkish order, and our removal contemplated, Addiya entreated me to take her with me to Jerusalem or England. . . My heart yearns over those dear men and women as they are now. But I am so thankful that for a few years a bit of new bright life was brought to them, and was as much as possible continued afterward.

"With name and place the known world through, the C.M.S. Missionaries had done splendid work in other parts of Palestine, and in Es Salt (Ramoath Gilead) on the east of the Jordan. Mr. Lethaby felt quite thankful to leave to their care the work which he had begun. Our helpers were willing to remain for a time under their auspices, and for some three years assisted the new Incumbent, the Rev. Dr. Johnson, who was also a Doctor of Medicine."

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Eventually the work was given up by the Society, and Dr. Johnson removed to Bagdad. It is understood that not even a government doctor is now upon the ground.

The human estimate of the results of this Kerak Mission may not be flattering. Dividends cannot be quoted. No evident and wide-spread reformation has greatly altered the general aspect of things. But if it be true that—"My Word . . shall not return unto ME void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"; then, it is absolutely certain, that the life of love lived in the midst of

social sterility, is still shedding its fragrance ; and the good seed sown prayerfully, persistently, lovingly, is still fructifying in unseen places ; and assuredly *that wilderness* will yet "blossom as the rose."

"Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the Lord."

JEREMIAH xlviii. 47.



PART III
AFTER KERA



ARAB TOWN, ADEN.



STEAMER POINT, ADEN.

'The Christian Church has never seriously given herself to the task of evangelising the Muhammadan nations. . . Men like Henry Martyn in Persia, Ian Keith Falconer in Arabia, Pfander and French in India, have laid down their lives in this great cause, but the Church as a whole has not sustained the efforts of her noblest sons.'

FOREIGN FIELD.

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was 'a dent'; and I laid me down in that place to sleep."

JOHN BUNYAN.

CHAPTER I

Aden. 1894-1899

AND it *was* a den; nobody spoke well of it. . . Bishop Blyth cautioned the Sitt about the fever-producing water, on the strength of his nephew's former residence there. The Consul's wife was horrified at the idea of Aden heat. But Dr. Patterson affirmed that the place was more sinned against than sinning.

The husband preceded the wife, and she, with mingled conjugal apprehension and confidence, commended him to God's protection, begging him not to be too eager to get sunstroke and fever by exposure, fatigue, or fasting.

The English flag has been unfurled in Aden since 1840—then over a cluster of mud and mat-covered huts sheltering 600 natives—now as an

outpost of the Indian Empire over a population of 50,000. It is the only fortified point between Egypt and Bombay, and is the centre of a British Protectorate for a limited inter-land over the neighbouring Arab tribes. It has become a supremely important coaling station; and its larger and smaller harbours are, together, the best on the coast of Arabia.

Its strong volcanic rocks are really the termination, on the south, of the great range of Sinai. But the site of the Aden camp is the crater of an extinct volcano; and it was here that the Bible Depôt had its place. The town itself is on the modest lower slopes.

In 1885, a Scotch Christian nobleman, Ian Keith Falconer, son of the Earl of Kintore, of the Free Church of Scotland, the pioneer of Protestant effort here, chose as centre for his mission Sheikh Othman, a few miles out of Aden, where he worked and suffered and entered into rest.

It was more than a coincidence, surely, that at Mr. Atlee's, in Jerusalem, the book which the Sitt's host had placed in her bedroom was the "Life of Keith Falconer!" The closing chapters on the Aden period she read with extraordinary interest, and with a feeling that it was all in the daily ordering.

At the time of Mr. Lethaby's coming to Aden, the Rev. Mr. Gardiner and Dr. Young were at the Keith Falconer Mission with a native helper. The mission had an auxiliary dispensary and school.

The journey Adenwards was uneventful. Jude and Job were the traveller's Bible reading. On his arrival, he says, angels met him, and he came into immediate fellowship with kindred spirits ; being received, too, with much courtesy by the magistrate of Aden and others. Stephanos, also, expressed his great gladness at his coming. In due time the goodwill of the chaplain was secured, and a favourable impression was made on the Assistant Resident and Consul of the Somali Coast, Major Seeley.

Lethaby speaks of his prospects with a good amount of hope :—

“ We have found a place and a corner for work in this uttermost and ‘ narrow neck of land,’ the peninsula of Aden, where British guns roar, and Arab and African souls live and die. Rome and Canterbury are caring for the soldiers here, but none others are represented. It was not quite easy under the circumstances to get a prayer-room, and then to essay a service without help, vocal or instrumental. Now we get a score or more present, and occasionally a blue-jacket from the R.N. A call in the hospital every Sunday afternoon helps to make one known. There is no ‘ Soldiers’ Home,’ so called, but there is a place where ‘ red-coats ’ and ‘ blue-jackets ’ are welcomed. By the courtesy of the Church of England Chaplain, I am asked to read the lessons in the Church at the evening service. With the Presbyterian Missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland we are also on most friendly terms. But Steamer Point, where the services are held, is five miles from the Soldiers’ Camp, and their own mission station is still more distant.

"The only evangelistic agency for these scores of thousands of natives and emigrants is the Depôt of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

A friendly pen early noted that Mr. Lethaby "is evidently feeling the heat a good deal, but there are evidences of abundant vigour also. Plenty of occupation is really a condition of life and health in the tropics." But writing later he says :—"The impression your letters, my 'dear fellow-labourer,' give me is that you are working too fast for the climate and your health. Could you not learn a little Oriental tranquility? It is not *all* idleness and '*laissez-faire*.' There is really good reason for avoiding, as much as possible, excessive expenditure of physical strength and nervous energy."

During the Sitt's final sojourn in Jerusalem, she accompanied the Rev. H. J. Morris, of South Africa, to Bethlehem and Hebron, her last visit to these loved spots. Once more she sat on "David's Well," and passed by "the lodge in a garden." At the "Pools of Solomon," for the first and only time, it was a matter of deep interest to examine "the spring shut up" and "the fountain sealed." They were accompanied by the Turkish soldier on guard at the Khan, close to the pools, who unlocked a grating in the ground, from which there was a descent of many steps. At the bottom they came upon two pools of the clearest water, with smoothly cemented margins. The pools glistened in the subdued light like a pair of crystal

mirrors. They are judged to be retired bathing-places, beautifully made and kept, probably constructed by Solomon himself, when the "King's Gardens" were a lovely paradise in the valley near. It is still a most fertile spot.

In the middle of September, with the benediction of her Jerusalem and Jaffa friends, the Sitt made her way to Port Said, and took passage in the *Duke of Devonshire* British-India s.s. The husband rejoiced greatly as the ship came to anchor in Aden "roads," and "home" became once more possible.

An early post brought a letter from Mr. Pritchett, whose tremulous handwriting he himself speaks of as "distinguished like your own":—"To be again busy as you are, offering God's Word to the Moslem, would delight me much," he said. "If any of my last thousand volumes are left, can you use them? The work at Aden will be much easier than at Kerak, and the food better, but the climate, I fear, is very trying. I hope God will use and protect you both."

Soon after the arrival of the Sitt, Stephanos went to Harar, which he had visited the previous spring, and took eight cases of the Scriptures, requiring four camels for their conveyance. This good man proved a most valuable, devoted, and conscientious colleague, and afterwards, in Abyssinia, Omdurman, Khartoum, and elsewhere, served the Society with great fidelity.

The head of the Commissariat in the Camp arranged for these new neighbours to have a regular supply of condensed water and bread from the military stores, so helping them over a serious initial difficulty.

For the first week the family tabernacle was a small suite of rooms over the "depository." But imperfect drainage made some new arrangement imperative. A corner house near by was secured, and satisfactorily prepared, so as to furnish a not too luxurious lounge for passers-by, who might be attracted by the "sacred wares," and disposed to talk on the mysteries of which the "Book" speaks. The first floor gave sufficient accommodation to the by no means fastidious missionary residents.

Mr. Lethaby's chief in Alexandria was wont to give him line upon line on the personal question:—"Do not imprison yourself without cessation in the Aden depôt during the absence of Stephanos. Make some "bank holidays" at your discretion; and leisurely, as need may arise, take Mrs. L. to Steamer Point when possible." The Secretary of the "Palestine Exploration Fund" thoughtfully suggested "a trip south to the 'Seychelle Islands,' which General Gordon thought the Garden of Eden"; but this did not come off.

In his voluntary work for the troops, Mr. Lethaby came under the auspices, ecclesiastically, of the Rev. J. M. Brown, of Calcutta, from whom he received a cordial welcome; as he did also

from the Rev. James Alexander Macdonald of the Christian Literature Society in India. The latter congratulated him on being "in such Edenic surroundings, though the traces of the fall are also too plainly visible there. Your work done in Moab will not be lost. I look for the advance of the Gospel, amid overturnings in China and elsewhere."

It was with some difficulty that the acutely sensitive man became accustomed to the many unusual noises about him, especially during Ramadan and Bairam, when his rest was much broken. But he was, after a while, "able to see the humour of much of it," and relief came as the noisy season ceased. The increasing sales month by month, were gratifying as the response to his personal efforts and testifying to the manifest advantage of the more suitable centre.

With Dr. Young, of Sheikh Othman, there was much interchange of courtesy, contributing not a little to mutual comfort, and Christmas Day was spent in this often welcome retreat.

As the season advanced, Mr. Lethaby was able to report himself as "cheerful, amid mosquitoes and dust and prickly heat."

In the early summer of 1895, it became necessary to revise arrangements with the Society. Should the stay extend beyond the twelve months agreed upon? It was, of course, a question of health and climate. It was with reason that Mr. Weakley wrote:—"We pray especially that you may both

be graciously preserved 'from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday.' " He was gratified, therefore, to receive from Aden a decided wish on the part of the " Agents," to abide for another period. They felt themselves there was indication that God was with them in their work. Some additional facilities were gladly conceded to make " endurance " approach as near to " comfort " as was possible.

At midsummer, the torrid zone was doing its utmost, and the Alexandrian friend wrote:—" Right glad I am to return the salute of a living gladiator, who does not fight as a slave, nor to win the applause of a multitude, but as a free soldier of Christ. The heat must have been unusually great in your latitudes, for, in a letter received to-day from Calcutta, I am informed that the Tramway Company there lost twenty-three horses in two days, from sunstroke. I hope your next will tell me that sickness has decreased with you. My son arrived last night, from Aden, and told me how pained he was to see you so exhausted. I beg you to shorten your hours of labour, and for some time during the day to abandon yourself entirely to disengagement of mind and rest of body. A native of the climate has his intervals of rest, not because of idleness, but because nature bids him take it. Fewer hours in the heated depôt will probably enable you to give as good a record as you do now."

The current " Class Book," which included men

both at the camp and at Steamer Point, had some twenty-five names upon it, many of whom attended with commendable regularity. They belonged, at the moment, chiefly to the Manchester regiment, and the 13th Royal Artillery.

There was always a real difficulty in the character of the people who visit Aden from the mountains, and the coast line of Arabia, especially from the serious fact that only a very small percentage of these people can read. There was apparently nothing new in the prospect which could reasonably call for increasing activity on the part of the Society. The pioneering work was stopped as far as Yemen ; and Sahej was practically closed by a large free distribution of the Gospels. The conclusion was, that it was the duty of the *Missions* on the spot to take up the work "in all the regions round about." This seems to have been, and to still be, the reasonable and effective method of work. The only practicable thing, therefore, was to put increased force, if that were possible, into the existing organization within the available zone ; and this Lethaby was always ready to do. "The direct and active work of the B. & F.B.S. in a foreign field, is pioneering for the Evangelist ; and most naturally and properly it passes eventually into the Evangelist's hands. The Society then falls back into the position of the very necessary *side* to the main effort."

Gratitude expresses itself in many ways. Here is a choice example, as amusing as it is gratifying :

"Most respected and honourable Reverend Lethaby and Mrs. Lethaby—father and mama.

"I beg most humbly and respectfully to submit this Holy Bible for your reverendship, and for you, my kind mother, for your continuous kindness to me at all moments. I am very poor, and have a father and mother both living. I was converted, but my parents were not ; and I pray to God to make them Christians.

"I solicit your reverendship and mother to continue this kindness as long as I live, and ask God to bless me.

"I beg to remain, most respected and kind father and mother,

"Your most obedient humble son and servant,

"TATTOO NARAYAN BHOSSLE.

"Aden, 25/12."

Interest in Palestine and Moab was as keen as ever. A friend reported :—

"In Jerusalem and Jaffa we have not been in any danger, for the authorities have been careful to warn the Moslem population of the consequences which will come upon them if Christians are molested ; but mission work has been prosecuted with great caution for some time past."

Miss Arnold was still there, and confirmed the chronic condition of unrest :—

"No one now receives English papers through the Turkish post. . . Your hearts would bleed to see what a plight the poor Keraki are in—worse, as it would seem, than under Mujelli tyranny. The most

mysterious part to me is that the M. thrive on Government money, and apparently prosper with good harvests, while the poor Keraki seem hardly to reap enough for seed the next year. Iniquity appears just to flourish 'like the green bay tree.' "

The family annals in the Aden home chronicle the trouble which this South Arabian climate was beginning to give, particularly to Mr. Lethaby's eyes, and with it a too general sense of pain and weakness.

As a balancing and wholesomely provocative item, there was the introduction into the circle of a tiny monkey, rejoicing in the suggestive name of "Miss Darwin." She was the source of infinite amusement, and brought salutary humour into a home not ordinarily over-furnished with that commodity. Correspondents inquired of her with great interest, as a highly important member of the household. Dr. Miller, of Sheikh Othman, for instance, saluted the diminutive quadrumana, albeit with a strange disrespect:—"Herewith let my hatred of Miss Darwin appear in the shape of bonds for her. May she never more escape to render the lives of fearful callers a terror to them. Poor 'Miss Darwin.' I doubt whether she will welcome my birthday gift to her. If the anniversary of her natal day be not this week, it will do for that happy day when it comes round." But Dr. Miller evidently had no thrilling understanding of the little creature.

The environment and general conditions of the Aden work may be intelligibly gauged by Mr. Lethaby's own recital :—

“ This place must not be thought of as identical with the trim military buildings, the few shops and telegraph offices, or even as the residence of the dealers and divers whom the name recalls to many. Five hours from the spot where travellers have for a short time anchored on their way to or from the East, and in the hollow of an extinct volcano, is a dense mass of thousands of men, women, and children, comprising heathen Muslims, Brahmins, Buddhists, Jains, and others, without a single missionary agency, except the *Depôt* of this Society. Yet within twelve months nearly a thousand copies of the Scriptures, in whole or in part, and in more than twenty languages, have there been purchased, and thence have gone forth on their heart-renewing work, and this, exclusive of the copies sent into the regions beyond to Abyssinia and Somaliland.

“ Nearly, if not quite half the population is always passing away, to be replaced in a few days from Somaliland and the interior of Arabia.

“ Here are Jews by the thousand, of at least three classes—those whose boast may be true that their ancestors were in Yemen before Christ was crucified, and that, therefore, they are not as guilty of the deed as others. Then the modern, trading, 'cute South Arabian Israelite, and the cultivated semi-rationalist Indian Jew. Besides these there are the hundreds of native troops from the Bombay Presidency, who pass up and down our crowded streets. Mingled with these are crowds of Parsees and educated Hindoos, the wild African, and the son of Ishmael, who knows how to say, 'B'isen Allah' ('by the name of God'), and little besides.

"But, oh! the pathos of it! that here they are all in a place where Christians were, when Pantaenus called on his way to India in the second century.

"Added to all is the constant procession of our English regiments and batteries, taking this as their last eastern station as they look eagerly for 'home.'

"Each one of these various classes has come within the range of the Society's efforts, during the twelve months, and of each there is something we gladly remember. Besides the sales, every day our texts in sheets and books are read by hundreds, and scarcely a day passes without the utterance of what is as truly bazaar-preaching as any in an Indian or Chinese town."

In June there was an unfortunate and complete breakdown, necessitating help from Alexandria. Relief from the noise and worry of the Dépôt was advised, by a removal to Sheikh Othman for a time, with an occasional visit of oversight. The alternative of giving up temporarily or altogether was a problem which had to be thought over.

It was encouraging to receive tidings of good from the many "red-coats" and "blue-jackets," with whom, for a while, they had come into fellowship. From the Matron of the "Soldiers' Home," Dover, came such a message: "I hear your names mentioned so often by some of the 'West Yorks' that I feel as if I must write to tell you how much the men appreciate the kindnesses they received from you both while they were at Aden—both your words of encouragement and warning. The bright, consistent lives of some of

them are a daily joy to me. They speak of Dr. Young, too. Will you tell him that his words have not been forgotten ? ”

In the early months of 1897, the Depôt and the evangelistic work among the military, were calling for all the available strength of both husband and wife. But the eyes were giving increasing anxiety, and friends on all hands were clamorous for a visit to England for urgent professional help.

As elsewhere, the proselytising difficulty was always, unfortunately, more or less in evidence. Mr. Lethaby was summoned to the Civic Hospital :—“ I would like you to come to the Hospital about John Baboos’ funeral, as I hear Father E. came early this morning, against my wish and permission, and either perverted him to the R.C. faith or, at any rate, performed some R.C. ceremony.”

We have already discovered that the element of personal sacrifice entered largely into his daily life ; and we are not surprised to find that for some while there was a monthly remittance of 20 rupees to the Jabulpur Orphanage Famine Fund—collected Sunday by Sunday from his soldier fellow-worshippers. In this way, often in his own most straitened moments, he freely spared, and encouraged others to spare, with large heart and lavish hand, for the pressing needs of suffering humanity.

He was always on the alert, too, for departures from the path of rectitude in such matters as the

surrender of fugitive slaves. It was owing to his good offices, that the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society received information at this time, which enabled them to assist the then Secretary for India in making active and potent some forgotten treaties with Sheikhs on the Arabian Coast.

Early in October it was found absolutely imperative, if Mr. Lethaby were to retain his sight at all, that he should go to England for skilled counsel and possibly for an operation. The voyage was tedious, but the cooler temperature, before reaching Brindisi, was helpful. At Malta he humorously tells us that :—

“The champion snorer of the ship has planted his portly carcase in my cabin. His terrors are already known and I am commiserated; but I dodge him by going to bed early, so getting first innings, and by rising, as I did this morning, at 5.

I have found a young Singapore Singhalese on board, who has a scholarship of £200 a year, and a note to the Rev. H. P. Hughes. My friend has no knowledge of, or friends in, the big Babel, so that his needs seem to point me to London first. My best wishes go to ‘Miss Darwin’ and her companion ‘Matt’. The little fellow would soon make himself at home here, but he would need a blanket.”

(Later). “My cabin companion has been wise enough to go to the saloon to sleep; so I now only hear the echoes. Mr. Laverack looked in upon us at Gibraltar. . . . Eddystone light is a lovely sight for sore eyes.”

On reaching Sidmouth, Thursday, Oct. 21, he found, “Home pleasanter than ever before. I

hear that Miss B. has kindly arranged for me to see her 'Doctor brother.' I mean to go to Babel on Saturday."

Greatly to his grief, he heard of the death by paralysis of his dear and constant friend Mr. Pritchett, at Bournemouth.

The report on the eye was at first indecisive; so he went down to Littlehampton to "think it over" and there found a tranquil harbour for anchorage.

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Meanwhile the Sitt rejoiced that in Aden the cooler mornings and nights had actually lowered the temperature to 86°! and on Nov. 1 she said:

"I can bear a little shawl in the evening as I sit and write in the only quiet time men and monkeys will allow me. But I ought not to libel the animals, for they are on the whole extremely good,—and so is Yaseen. But he is still a Somali. He was touched and delighted with your gift; and the scrap of paper on which you wrote his name is sacredly kept. Our little 'Mattie' squeals with delight when I tell him 'Khowadja' is coming; but 'Miss Darwin' resigns herself, after looking round, and makes the most of present company."

Dr. Johnson, invalided home from Kerak, called at Alexandria, slowly recovering from a terrible time of sickness, which carried off his colleague, Miss P.

Bishop Tucker of Uganda visited the Sitt with two lady friends in November. She tells her husband that: "He looks better than last year. We had much pleasant talk over tea, and he was

greatly interested in you and your present circumstances. Aden is not so bad this time of year; but the visit of these good friends was indeed refreshing in the loneliness inseparable from the place, and it was delightful to be able to talk freely good 'Queen's English' after so many days of Arabic only."

These linguistic difficulties are amusingly illustrated:—"Basil came over to ask me if I would interpret a letter, *English*, written by an *Austrian* merchant in Mussowah to a *Greek* in Tawahi who couldn't understand it. The soldiers were highly delighted to hear me give it in *Arabic*, then for Basil to write and read it in *Greek* until he could really understand the enterprising man's earnestness in seeking to do business."

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In London the "Khowadja" permitted himself the relaxation of the Egyptian Hall, and called on divers friends. Among others he saw Dr. Newman Hall whom he was sorry to find, "far from what he was physically, but was all himself as he recalled his visit to Jerusalem." The man "on sick leave" was already giving Sunday School addresses and in other ways feeling his feet. At the hospital he was both gratified and surprised when the Doctor reported that with the left eye so good, and the right so quiet, there was no need for an operation. But the optician's help had to be at once sought, and the Secretary at the Bible House enjoined quiet resting in the country.

This counsel was not very conscientiously followed, for almost immediately we find him in Birmingham in the thick of the excitement of the Central Hall Anniversary, and among those with whom he loved to congregate—including Messrs. Collier, Peter Thompson, Chadwick and Wiseman, of whom he says:—"There is hope for England and Methodism while it has such men."

At Manchester Central Hall he found that: "The Rev. H. J. Jowett's *was* a sermon; no report will tell its power"; and at the Free Trade Hall Meeting: "Dr. Maclaren is the Nonconformist King of Manchester; he had a wonderful reception—all standing to receive him."

Then came a homely, pleasurable sojourn at Rochdale, "where there was always a knife and fork at his disposal," and a deep draught of the delights of Greenthorpe. Then a stay with his friend, the Rev. M. J. Elliott, at Birkenhead, formerly of Alexandria; and with Mr. and Mrs. Gray-Hill.

The Sitt, with considerable strain upon her, kept hot all the irons, for which she felt herself responsible, with a good amount of success; but there were moments of stress which were necessarily exhausting. Incidents of special interest were helpfully sustaining. Here is one as related to W.L. :—

"I was sent for to the Civil Hospital the other evening at 8.30. Dr. Anderson informed me that a sick man,

who was very ill, belonged to the Irish Presbyterian Church, but that the R.C.'s wished to have care of the man. Dr. A. objected. Well, I found a poor Indian who could speak and read Marathi; but I had to get all information through an interpreter, whom Dr. A. sent with me. 'Irish' was the one English word the poor dying man could say distinctly. Through the doctor's assistant he plainly expressed his love for and faith in '*Yesu Masih.*' He was very grateful for my coming, but necrosis of the jawbone, poor creature, prevented him from talking much. I found he would like some soft bread and some jelly; so Yaseen took up the soft part of my fresh loaf in tissue paper, and some apricot jam in a new bright tin. I put in the parcel also a '*Marathi*' Gospel of St. Matthew, with the man's name written—'Reuben, a member of the Irish Presbyterian Church in India.'

"At seven, the next morning, a note came saying, 'The man is dead, please arrange for the funeral.' So I put on my hat and returned to the hospital. It seems the poor man was much pleased with the gospel in his own tongue, and the little things which Yaseen took. But in the early morning he was not, for God had taken him. Dr. Young arranged to bury the dear fellow. I found that he had been a month in the hospital. This saved Marathi heathen lies by the side of the saintly Keith Falconer."

The Sitt's hands were wonderfully upheld, and it was with a very glad heart she told this comforting story to her husband :—

"On Saturday morning there came in a Portuguese who called on you last year, and to whom you showed those large Beirut Arabic Bibles, and talked two hours

until you could talk no more. He told me how miserable he had been for months in Goa, and that he could not get peace of mind from all the saints, nor from the Virgin Mary herself. He went to the R.C. 'padre' to talk over his distress, but he replied, 'My son, I give you my blessing; there is no need for you to trouble; go in peace.'

"He could hardly keep back the tears as he said to me, 'Please tell me, madam, what can I do?' 'We will first pray as we are, here at the table,' I replied, 'and the Holy Spirit will help you to know Jesus as your own Saviour.' After prayer, I took the last penny Testament and gave it to the man. It was the first he had ever possessed. I asked him, as he was an educated gentleman, to read especially and with a prayerful spirit the Gospel of St. John.

"On Sunday morning his Somali boy brought a long letter to me, beginning, 'Dear Madam, I do not really know how to thank you for the kind help you gave to my troubled spirit. I should call it a miracle, because the Book you so kindly gave me has done wonders. It not only cured my painful mind; it has showed that I have every right to go to blessed Jesus straight.' Then he speaks of the effect upon him of the story of the man at the pool of Bethesda, and of the man who was born blind, and concludes:—'My people were questioning me about my Testament; and with threats they told me not to read it. But I said it was a present from a venerable lady, and I should respect her gift. They mock me, but I will go through the Holy Testament, and will let you know the result.'

"This morning he came to tell me that he had refused again to go with his relatives to Mass and Confession; they, in great anger, put all his things and his box into the street and cast him out. But the very half-hour in

which this was done, an offer came for him to earn his bread another way."

As the health of their Aden representative was definitely improving, the Committee of the Bible Society, towards the end of January, made proposals for the future. As soon as Mr. Lethaby felt himself to be sufficiently recruited, it was suggested he should return to his work for a further term of two years; if for that period his own health and that of his wife permitted of such an extension. They both knew the place thoroughly, and their work was valued. The Committee was far from desiring them to expose themselves to obvious peril, but hoped that, using all proper precautions, such a course might be practicable, and the work be still carried on successfully.

Neither the husband nor the wife felt free to make such an offer themselves, but the definite invitation came. He put the position to a friend in this way :—"There seems now sufficient light to show the path I should take. It is not the one that would have been chosen by me, but 'winding or straight,' it leads onward, and is the one apparently marked out by Providence. . . The Bible Society has twice over requested me to keep on in Aden for two years. This comes to me as the call of duty; so that, unless hindered by Providence—an acceptable hindrance—in the early part of next month, I leave Old England

once more ; but more certainly and literally with a ' single eye ' than before, for Genoa, Alexandria, and so on to Aden."

Meanwhile, his two " attending angels," as he called them, " fresh air " and " free talk," ministered to him. The Sitt was getting the latter, but not much of the former, ministrant. Their friend Mr. King, a spiritually-minded man in the Army, had very effectively assisted in the services during Mr. Lethaby's absence.

The Ramadam and Bairam festival seasons were again an anxious time, but the Sitt secured some respite away from the Bazaar, and anticipated the return of her husband by an Italian steamer due at Aden April 4th. Further steps had been taken, too, for securing, if possible, a more quiet home life.

The needs be of increased help for, and influences upon, these many-tongued visitors was continually being pressed home :—

" The Indian and Goanese servants of officers," says the Sitt, " even those who are heathen, like Christian sympathy. While I have been writing, a Punjabi Christian, butler to Colonel K., of the ' Manchesters,' has come in to ask if I have an English book, ' The Way of Life,' translated into Punjabi. He said he did not see missionaries here as in India. I invited the good man to come to the Bible Depôt whenever his duties would allow him, and gave him some ' back numbers,' which he welcomed, but he much desired the book in Punjabi to give to a friend. I feel sure that in such individual cases God has work for us or others to do. So we must not

feel that 'at our age' there is no room for our zeal and ministry. There is!"

Hearing of Lethaby's imminent return to the "crater," a friend, who declared himself in the "dismal dumps," wrote jauntily:—"I can imagine how, in the memory of your past roasting and toasting, and your present expectations of similar experiences, you may think of my 'messengers of Satan' as white-blooded and kid-gloved. Anyhow, I had rather be eaten up by a lion than be stung to death and devoured in infinitesimal portions by a colony of black ants. . . . But you'll be just as near to Heaven when you get to Aden as you can be in any part of England."

During these months Aden and the district was visited by a bad epidemic of smallpox and fever, which upset all calculations. But more commodious premises were secured for the Dépôt, and their friend Mr. King, who was on the point of leaving for England to rejoin his wife and child, was of untold service to the Sitt in the converging difficulties.

There were quite eager anticipations of the new centre.

"We shall be nearer the open road and sea wind, and be further removed from Coffee-house babble. We may possibly get a taste of the 'tom-toms' at the feasts, but we shall miss certainly the copper-scraping, wood-sawing, camel-swearing, and Somali wowing at Merwalis. Then we shall not have a school of Arab children to the left of us, and another at our stair door to the right of us, beside

Sitt Zainab's goats and kids on the stairs, all not a little emphasized on the Sundays. And this freedom, too, without a hint, let us hope, of the fearful smells with which we have become too familiar all round."

The return journey to Aden "was as unremarkable as one would wish." The traveller was the guest of Mr. Weakley at Alexandria for a day. He found the Suez Canal wonderfully improving as a spectacle. On Thursday he entered the "seething pot," from which he emerged into "the boiler" on Sunday, and "on Monday morning the sounds of Somali voices, and the sight of a black umbrella in a boat, at once repelled and attracted."

Before the returning wayfarer reached Aden, the change into the new quarters had been effected, and proved for the general well-being. He saluted it as a "wealthy place." The two settled down again to work, without the perilous excitements of Kerak, but with enough of difficulty to make them glad it was the Lord's work and not their own. Yet the uncertainties of the future led our friend to say on the 21st April, 1898:—"With all due remembrance of James' advice, 'Go to now, ye that say to-morrow,' etc., I yet think of the time when, if spared, I *may* leave this place alive. There's a *possibility* that Mrs. L. might go first and spend a while with her brother at Cape Town, but that is problematical, and we might leave together, say, the second spring after this."

It was no exaggerated picturing which led a correspondent to say:—"We are glad to know

that you flourish, in spite of the heat and sandstorms, in a sort of 'health that pain and death defies.' "

The wild behaviour of their Somali lad, Yaseen, reminded them of Mohamed at Kerak, but they were unwilling to abandon hope or drive him into the darkness which would be likely to envelop him.

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The Sitt had now to get much-needed rest and recruit, after the very long spell of wearing work, and this was a contributory weight in the decision communicated to Mr. Weakley, in November, to leave Aden when the 'two years' expired, fifteen months later, if they were spared so long. But there was no relaxation of effort. Their work among the men in camp became more fruitful, and letters from England and elsewhere recalled gratefully the permanent effect of the ministry in the prayer-room. For the succeeding months the departments were carried on with unflagging zeal, but with an exhausting expenditure of physical powers. But they were reminded by their monitor at Alexandria, "The more arduous the conditions, the more honourable the service of the King."

Dr. Young was most kind in keeping them supplied with current literature as it came into his hands, and this was a real and welcome counterpoise. Yet in the second week of the New Year (1899) W.L. writes :—

"For eight months of the year it is almost impossible to accomplish more than the merest minimum of letter

writing, and now that it is so cool as even to get a little below 80°, it is by no means an easy thing to do all we would like to do, to say nothing of incessant interruptions from outside gossipers and shrieking women and flies and perspiration. But, in spite of all, we have by God's great goodness got through this last year."

Mr. Lethaby's heart always beat faster when any purposeful individual or Society came in his way, having for a motive the realization of the 'reign of peace and goodwill among men.' 'The International Crusade of Peace' came within his horizon in February, 1899, and he immediately secured a set of the literature of the Society, explaining its objects and methods. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society again appealed to him, and he gave the Society the advantage of his experience and observation.

The Rev. Thomas Champness had long been one in heart and purpose with him. Mr. Champness was now on his lengthened tour round the world, and his friends at Aden were full of excitement when they discovered his plan to call on them in his homeward journey.

From Brisbane, Mr. Champness wrote:—"We expect to leave Sydney on the 5th or 6th of May by the P. and O. s.s. *Arcadia*. You will know when she should be in Aden. It will be a great pleasure to see you both. This is a wonderful country, but 'Gold' is god and 'Pleasure' is his prophet. Yet there are some of the excellent here.

It takes an image of gold to bring Shadrach and his friends to the front."

By the time the *Arcadia* was off Aden, much had occurred. A collapse came which made it probable that the little Englishman would, after all, leave his bones in Arabian soil. He was far too prostrate to permit of an attempt to meet his friend on board the ship; and once more the Sitt was his proxy.

When she found Mr. Champness and his son, the hours were so few during which the ship could remain at anchor, that it was at first declared impossible to attempt a visit to the 'Crater.' But the very critical condition of his friend induced the warm-hearted brother to see that it was just possible with a rush. So the three hastened Adenwards in boat and 'gharri.' Mr. Champness was terribly shocked at the sight of the stricken man, and immediately insisted that he must, at all hazards, be at once conveyed to the ship, and, before it was too late, have the chance of the remedial effects of the voyage. There was no vacant cabin, but he should have his, and they would manage somehow. And it was only on the promise that the two would wind up affairs at once, and take the next available ship to England, that the insistent friends returned to the *Arcadia* commending the prostrate man and the bewildered wife to the Divine care.

The medical missionary at Sheikh Othman (Dr. Young was himself away on sick leave), was a

most kind friend through these painful days and nights; and both Dr. and Mrs. Morris helped these helpless people as tender brother and sister. They quite believed he could not survive the utter exhaustion after fever, and watched with the Sitt night and day in their own bungalow, to which Mr. Lethaby had been taken with great difficulty. Here he became unconscious, and remained so, with only occasional intervals of knowledge even of his wife or of current events. His own birthday, the 9th of June, he knew nothing of.

The first days possible there was precipitate closing of personal and official affairs. Dr. Morris promptly undertook, temporarily, the oversight of the Dépôt. Steamer Point was, with ingenious toil, at length reached. The shattered man was carried on board. And so the Aden chapter abruptly closed.

**" How tired a face, how tired a brain, how tired
A heart I lift, and long
For something never felt but still desired,—
Sunshine and song,—
Song, where the choirs of sunny Heaven stand choired,"**

CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

CHAPTER II

The Last Decade. 1899-1909

THE Divine Healer so used the three weeks of voyage as the beginning of a restorative process that, although the sick man landed "more dead than alive," the Sitt was able, on the 10th July, to write from Torquay:—

"You will be surprised, but thankful, to know that after a most terrible illness, Mr. L. is once more on his native soil. He is still very weak, but improving daily. We know that you will unite in the prayer that he may soon be really strong enough to enjoy converse and daily life. The pains in the head are sometimes very acute and his prostration great, yet the contrast to eight days ago, when he was carried from the ship at Plymouth on shore, and met by the Bible Society Agent, is marvellous. Now he is able, at intervals, to take short walks, and he even ventured to Chapel last evening."

The house at Sidmouth was already occupied by a sick relative, so that it was not for some months that he got once more to that 'fair

haven.' His powers of endurance were increasing, and when the familiar lovely lanes and sea-front became again his haunt, life and its remaining possibilities were gradually re-assumed as legitimate subjects of thought. But he had, as it proved, already entered on his last decade.

Old friends, hearing that the wandering missionary had again 'escaped to land,' albeit on 'boards and broken pieces of the ship,' showed him 'no small kindness,' and many invitations for sojourns of recruit reached Sidmouth. So it was not long before he was again an 'itinerant.'

On the 4th September he and the Sitt were welcomed at the Bible House; and temporary arrangements for moderate service were made. Falmouth became the resting-place and working centre for such labours as were now possible for the next five or six years. With other light engagements, he found congenial but unremunerative employment as librarian in the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Institute, and revelled in the mental travels and researches which his honorary position made possible. The delectable Cornish Riviera eminently fitted the physical needs of both. In his own Church he was soon at home, and quickly became hardly less active, Sabbath or week-day, than he had been in his earlier days. He was always gluttonous of work, but his financial resources were limited and diminishing. His work was mainly 'labour of love.' A new sphere does

not open readily to a man approaching seventy, although hope sometimes flatters.

There was much pleasurable and helpful intercourse with the aged poor, especially at the 'Retreat.' "One old lady of ninety-one, a member of the Church seventy-five years," says the Sitt, "we found in the 'Retreat' this morning with the broom, sweeping her one room. With a clean fire-place and boiling kettle, she delighted to tell us that she hoped to be 'gone home' after Christmas. She has outlived her relatives and longs to rejoin them, though she is still able to walk to Chapel, and tends herself as many do at 65."

In the beginning of 1905, an offer came from Frome, through the Free Church Council, of the pastorate of a Mission Hall, which included a number of secondary organizations, in addition to its proper evangelistic work. The Lethabys regarded the opening as from the 'Giver of all good.' It meant work of the kind they could both do. It was definite, and had associated with it an acceptable honorarium, although quite limited, both as to time and amount. It was all right for some months, at any rate.

This 'Naish Street' work mingled well enough with fairly frequent calls to Bible Meetings in Somerset and the adjoining counties, which he enjoyed, under the auspices of the district secretary, the Rev. E. J. Eardley. Frome, too, brought them again into the midst of a

circle of friends, at once appreciative and appreciated.

After some months, the 'Naish Street' engagement became purely voluntary; but it was continued for a time under these new, but unwelcome, because almost impossible, conditions. Good wishes, a home, and congenial society, are not the only requisites for human happiness in this sublunary sphere; so there was a painful pressure which increasingly made itself felt. Meanwhile, a number of friends, old and new were glad, occasionally, to send proofs for 'reading.' This professional work was always refreshing, and he would have welcomed more.

Early in 1906, he sums up the circumstances of the moment, cheerfully:—

"I have the reputation of being 'still happy,' because methought the wife was nearer to Jeremiah's key than that of the Cherubim. Certainly I try to *do* as much as I can, and always find, though sometimes painfully, that labour is its own reward.' . . . As long as the people (of the mission) are willing, we do what we can. Sunday and Thursday evenings, Band of Hope, etc.; Circuit work; helping at the Congregational Chapel during the Pastor's illness:—more than fill the calendar with entries. And now, with the general election, of course, the tongue-strings are loosened. For the present, we can only see and serve where we are."

The quickening of the "Missionary Friday," at the Nottingham Conference, gave these missionaries at heart much real gladness and hope.

Then there was 'a scamper to London, and a three nights' sojourn in the new L.C.C. 'Bruce Home.' He was always drawn, when possible, to the services of the 'London Mission,' at which, not infrequently, his voice was heard in prayer. He was wont to make his homeward journeys from London by sea, *viâ* Falmouth. It was a wholesome luxury to him to peep behind the scenes of all sorts and conditions of life. Then he speaks of "the pleasure some returned old letters from Kerak have given, in their re-perusal; almost as great as did the line on the July wrapper of 'The Bible in the World,'—'Collected in Kerak, Moab, 5s. and 9d.' Please to put this side by side with a twelve miles' walk on Sunday to my old field, Norton St. Phillip, and two services."

The 'National Peace Congress' drew him to Bristol, and he was a greatly interested sharer in its discussions. He was also a representative to his District Synod in the same city. So the still eager heart was kept quickened and in touch with the onward movements of the Church, and of the Christian Commonwealth generally.

In November, came the tidings of the death of their dear, tender, helpful friend, Thomas Champness,—'translated to higher service.' And there were premonitions that his own work was, may be, approaching its end. At the close of the year, he voiced his sometimes keenly felt declension, in this sentence:—"I feel increasingly that I am not

‘wanted’ here. Short days, long nights, and no work, will bring me again to an invalid state, I fear. I do not want to be a dormouse and hibernate, now that I am a septuagenarian.”

There was a passing thought that possibly it might be expedient to join some relatives at Rovigo, in North Italy, but that proved an impracticable dream; and other suggestions of ‘work’ and ‘meat’ were, for the moment, hopeful, but illusive.

Friendly pressure was put upon him to prepare ‘Memorabilia’ of his unique experiences, especially at Kerak, but the difficulty was that his material was scattered, and the day was not then in sight when his papers could be brought together in some place which could be called ‘home,’ with a sense of permanence. “My wife longs for a fire-side and a saucepan to call her own,” he says. “I should like to see, once again, books which I prize; and if I knew the hour of death, should like to be within easy reach of Exeter Cemetery. But, above all, I long to see some work that is evidently God appointed. Of ‘prospects,’ with all our ‘going up’ and ‘looking,’ there is none.”

In January, 1907, he found himself in “this Cauldron Babel” again. “It gets to be more and more a vortex,” he says. “I shall be glad to be only a mortar-boy to the Nehemiahs, who are doing their best to ‘build Jerusalem’ in our native land.” He was ever in his element among his brethren of the L.P.M.A. Association, with which

he actively associated himself whenever possible. "Brother M." (an octogenarian) he tells us "is showing us young people how to grow old gracefully." Then he continues: "The new theology seems to be as alarming to many as the influenza; but so far, I am immune from both, I hope; though I heard the prophet—or false prophet—of the City Temple say some outrageous words."

In the spring, he contracted a chill, which was followed by much suffering, and for many weeks he limped and walked with difficulty. But he did not fail to show an interested excitement in noting that there had been an influx of 170,000 Jews to Palestine, and to ask himself seriously "What will the harvest be?" The old love for the Orient, too, was rekindled to enthusiasm in connection with 'Palestine in Lambeth,' in 1908.

In the early part of this, his last summer on earth, circumstances were providentially tending towards the realization of the wish already recorded. He, himself, tells how: "Dear, good people in Exeter say they have a little house in Kenton, and ask if we should like a roof-tree of our own. Now, this is manifestly, as the Arminian Magazine used to put it, 'The Providence of God asserted,' and is accepted by us as such; but at present it is only 'asserted.' Yet, as it seems to be Providence, *faith* is Hebrews xi. 1. So ere the wintry storms begin, I hope our address will be No. 1, High Street, Kenton. It is on the confines of Powderham Park, under the

shelter of the Haldon Hills, and overlooks the estuary of the Exe. We are both desirous to 'follow the Gleam.' "

Of his growing infirmities he is increasingly conscious, and he continues: "Both penalties and pleasures have fallen to my lot lately. Of the former, a serious interference with my powers of locomotion—gout, rheumatism, sciatica, and a few other things are diagnosed. I am disposed to think that my old friend Mr. Hedges, of Ealing, got near the mark, when he sympathised and said it was 'Anno Domini.' Anyhow, one hour and three-quarters, yesterday, it took me to do three miles' walking, and in pain, too. But—though I had to ride and not walk—the week before last saw me at the L.P.M.A. Aggregate Meeting at Hull, and I have to-day read the proofs of the August number of the Magazine. My hostess had kindly invited me twelve months ago to pay this visit. And you may suppose that the nights of sleep were shorter than the days of talk. . . . In going up, *viâ* London, I saw the 'Orient,' and in returning spent as many hours in the 'Franco-British' as my tired powers would stand, short of suicide. But now 'I am to the margin come.' "

The arrangements for removal to Kenton were gradually completed, but it was evident that it would be wiser for the Sitt to superintend this business herself, and to complete it in the absence of her husband, for whom a visit to relatives at

Watford, during this ordeal, had been considerably suggested. So, in September, the thing was done in that way.

How strangely tenacious he was of life, and how alert he was still in all his old loves, let the visit to the British Museum, during this passage through London, show: "I discovered," he wrote to his wife, "in a students' room which I had not previously visited, a manuscript of St. John's Gospel, written probably within a hundred years of the evangelist's death. It is wonderful to see, and to be told that these papyri are all new (to the Museum), and that even Scrivener and Westcott and Hort knew them not. They are in cases, and are placed between very clear glass, so that you can turn them over and let the light fall on them to read. Pap. 782 is not much longer than 'With the Bedawin.' I could read some of the Greek words but it tried my eyes, and I had to leave the eye-aching work. These things are two or three hundred years' older evidence than even the Alexandrian or Sinaitic MSS."

Is it not delightful to see this infirm, half-blind old man laboriously paying homage of mind and heart to these perishing but rescued early copies of portions of the 'precious Book,' to which he still clung with tender, grateful love and confidence?

Mr. Lethaby reached Falmouth from London on the last day of September. Thence he wrote of his anticipated home, which he was dreaming of

as having some distant likeness to Kerak, with the Haldon Hills as the 'munitions of rocks.' "To both of us it will be, I hope, a Bethesda, and a few days more will, I pray, see us enjoying 'fire' and 'roof' at *home*."

The active kindness of "our new landlord" was a sweet ingredient in the cup of blessing. The Sitt worked that her husband might "have a delightful surprise, when he sees a local habitation—a place prepared for him now that his marching days are over." How literally these last words were true, she did not then know, but added: "W.L. has put together all his Jerusalem and Kerak letters and papers, and I am quite hoping that, with a fire in the room I have set apart for him and his books, he may yet be able to piece together the story of his work, if sight keep good."

So, by the 15th October he was sitting at his own table "reading proofs." On that day he wrote:—

"This morning I had a short walk round the village. In my native city, last week, at the home of our greatly kind friends, the Messrs. L., I keenly enjoyed Sir Henry Thompson's book. His medical hints to old men certainly endorse and authorise my own methods. It is diet, not medicine, we need think of. . . No place seems so atmospherically quiet as this village; the trains are out of hearing, and the stillness at night surpasses Exeter.

"It made me smile to think, as you suggest, of putting my feet on the mantel, when I can scarcely put them on

a hassock without pain. Yet it is an inestimable blessing to be as we are and where we are. . . . The drag to comfort is my own physical topsy-turvydom. I shrivel outwardly and inwardly."

To his friend, Mrs. G., he says on the 16th:—

"These six months have been more like some of the chapters in the Revelation, for the 'voices,' and 'trumpets' and 'woes.' But the simile holds good '*in extremis*'; and the final outcome is the blessing of a quiet resting-place, which, if a contrast to your 'Hall Nook,' is yet a nook big enough for us to hide our heads in, and be thankful. We are six miles below Exeter. The red earth and the green grass contrast beautifully. The buoyant health, which for more than seventy years has been my usual good fortune, is an almost total eclipse; 'the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint'.

"The charm of native air and quiet, and a fireside of our own,—the first for ten years,—has been almost equalled by the opening of boxes and cases of letters and books which have been unseen for the same period. When I was brought away from Aden, our belongings were left in the hands of our Somali and Goanese friends.

"Last evening I felt it to be one of the 'crowning mercies' that I was able to take a service in the Chapel here,—the first since August, and I am planned for another. I am very thankful also to feel that I have not slid out of touch with politics or ethics; and never felt more enthusiastic for all true progress."

On the 23rd he continues: "To take up the pen 'doeth good like a medicine'; or rather as medicine is supposed to do. . . . It seems to me that we need to go back to the first chapters of the Acts, and then *work* and pray ourselves forward. . . . I have never seen a 'Revelation' other than that of St. John the Divine, and

that overleaps all my powers. But I am very desirous of all real 'Higher Criticism,' and grieve that there is such terrible ignorance of the Scriptures,—what they are and what they mean. . . . Have you seen a book on the New Testament Canon by a Mr. Kenyon of the British Museum? It is a wonderful illuminant on our present knowledge, and is the first book I would buy. Guided by it, I had, in the Students' Room of the Museum, *in my hand* a piece of papyrus of John xxi, in which the words were perfectly decipherable. And this was written in Egypt only one generation after the original autograph by John or his amanuensis. And then to think of the volumes of German and other nonsense which have been so confident that John wasn't John, and that all the ages have only succeeded in discovering a mare's nest."

So long as energy was given, he found some new pleasure, day by day, in the pure air and fresh country scenes. But strength failed and pain so increased, that he had to be assisted to rise from his chair, or to sit. Yet with almost superhuman effort he attended the 'Circuit Quarterly Meeting' in Exeter on Dec. 27. He pathetically asked his wife, days before, to help him to attend, and of course to accompany him, and was greatly delighted when all was arranged. There was a cab to the station, for he could no longer walk that mile and a half.

How eager he was, beyond the joy of fellowship with his brethren, to do the matters of business which had been planned—to pay for the relettering of his grandmother's grave-stone ; to buy a pair of

new boots ; to get a cheque cashed, and see to details of settlement with his friend Mr. L. Then, on his return, how grateful he was to the station-master at Starcross, who so kindly led and supported him, and to Mr. Priest, the cab-proprietor, who carried him into the house.

On the 4th January, 1909, the hand that was gradually 'forgetting its cunning' did its last little bit of trembling work, as it wrote in almost illegible and blotched characters a New Year's message to his friends at Hastings. After painfully feeling his way through four lines and a-half it had to be left for another hand to finish, and the friends only too easily read 'between the lines.'

He had now but little power to walk, and the Vicar considerably suggested the bath-chair provided for the invalids of Kenton. In this, for a while, the pining for fresh air was gratified, and both still hoped much from the 'coming of the spring'—but it was towards the 'everlasting spring' he was trending. On Christmas morning he walked with his wife into the church, hard by, and found quiet, gladsome help, as he listened to the carols of the young village choristers. So he kept young to the last, and with 'great joy' kept watch once more with the shepherds in the 'fields of Bethlehem.'

Then the two went on together, trusting and hoping, for nearly another month, as every day one and another of the 'tabernacle pins' was

taken up. There were not infrequent intervals of unconsciousness.

In the middle of January the change was more rapid. Friends came in from Exeter. The aid of doctor, nurse, and a motherly neighbour had to be sought, and it was feared that any hour might bring the final scene. Through all these days he was mercifully spared 'soul distresses,' but there were frequent spasms of pain, and rapid and difficult breathing.

The night of the 24th was peaceful, and the wife was his sole watcher. He still said, "Pray that I may have strength given me again for work! work!"

The bed was kept only a week. On the day before his death the Rev. John Hugh Morgan came in from Exeter; but the dying man was too near the borderland to do other than faintly respond to his pastor's prayer and solacing commendatory words. "Rest came at length" in the early morning, after a night of acute suffering. The chief onlooker thought more of the blessedness of release than of imminent personal loneliness.

"So may my soul nurse patience day by day.

Watch and pray,

Obedient and at peace.

Living a lonely life in hope, in faith

Loving till death,

When life, not love, shall cease."

CHRISTINA ROSETTI.

He was borne to his grave by six of his brethren in the lay ministry in Exeter, and awaits the morning of the resurrection in God's Acre not far from the grandmother who nurtured and loved him, and shaped his early years. They meet up yonder!

"He has his 'old-age pension,' now," said a friend, on hearing that "Lethaby of Moab" had removed from his little home at Kenton to the prepared mansion in the City of God.



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